THE ENTHUSIASTS OF PORT-ROYAL

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MARIE MADELEINE,
COUNTESS OF LA FAYETTE

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IN VERITATE ET CHARITATE
CORNELIVS IANSSENIVS EPISCOPVS IPRENSIS ET QVONDAM IN ACADEMIA LOVANIENSI S. THEOLOGIÆ DOCTOR, PROFESSOR REGIVS, ÆTATIS QVI ET OBITVS LIII.

JANSENIUS, BISHOP OF YPRES

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY W. A. DOES AFTER THE PAINTING BY PHILIPPE DE CHAMPAGNE

THE ENTHUSIASTS OF PORT-ROYAL

BY

LILIAN REA

WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO

MY MOTHER

PREFACE

"Croyez-moi, il faut choisir entre Dieu et le monde, entre la beauté éternelle et la vaine apparence. . . . C'est quelque chose de vrai et de sérieux qu'il nous faut pour vivre et pour mourir."

La Duchesse de Broglie

AFTER the lapse of centuries, when Pain, Sorrow, Struggle, Disappointment, and Weariness have been swallowed up in the Eternal Abyss, the picturesque side of a religious movement stands out to the impartial student of history in all the glory of prismatic colours. And, regarding it from a sociological and literary point of view, that which lends it interest and sympathy — is Enthusiasm. Nor is Enthusiasm used lightly in connection with religion, for the very etymology of the word justifies the application. Derived from the Greek ενθους, or ενθεος, that is, "full of the god," it may be interpreted to mean having a god within.

It was one of the phases of this creative emotion which produced the society of *solitaires* or recluses who in the early seventeenth century associated themselves with the Abbey of Port-Royal, and formed with the original convent of nuns an organization which assumed a vast significance in the religious history of France.

In an age of the extreme of earthly pomp and grandeur, the high ideals and unselfishness of these "Aristocrats of Catholicism," as they were called, were doubly conspicuous; but, aside from any religious point of view, a chronicle of the extraordinary ardour, both collective and individual, of men who, searching after a higher spirituality, left brilliant positions in the world to go into the Desert to meditate and pray, inspires

human interest still. For, thinking to lose their social significance, they were in reality, both through their spiritual, literary, and pedantic sway, drawn back into the active life of their country. To them the profane history of the time of Louis XIV is indissolubly linked.

Theologically, their religion was based on a dogma, called in derision by the outside world, Jansenism. Joseph de Maistre, in his book, *Du Jansénisme ; portrait de cette secte,* wrote sarcastically :

" Il n'y a point de Jansénisme—c'est une chimère, une phantôme crée par les Jésuites " ;

and Mère Angélique for one always denied the term. In 1650 she spoke of the continued slanders against " those whom they call Jansenists," and five years later wrote to the Queen of Poland :

" If it please your Majesty, in writing to His Holiness you might say that you have particular knowledge of the persons whom they call Jansenists, that they are no other than very Catholic and very much attached to the Holy See."

In reality, while the dogma was a lifeless thing locked up in the Halls of the Sorbonne, the working out of the peculiar system of religion which the name Jansenism stands for went on regardless of theological disputes, alive and pulsating with vital fire in the Monastery of Port-Royal. Here, even in the midst of later trouble there was, says Sainte-Beuve,

" in spite of everything, almost without interruption, the cloister, the sanctuary, the cell, and the grating for alms, the Christian practice of morals and the inviolable home of certain souls: the poor and silent study, the desert and the *Grotto of Conferences* near the *Fountain of Mère Angélique*, not far from the trees planted by the hand of d'Andilly."

The *Nécrologe* of Port-Royal and its Supplement are full of the most uncomplimentary allusions to the age itself, to which they attribute all the ills that happen to mortal flesh and blood, alluding constantly to the "press of the century"; the " unhappiness of the century " ; the " distractions and

corruption of the century"; etc. Racine relates that Jacqueline Pascal early renounced the "vain amusements of the century"; while in one of her letters Mère Angélique declares that

"In this miserable century, it seems that the Devil has had the power to snatch away the Gospel, or at least its practice, from almost all Christians."

Thus, it was not strange that in contrast with the unrest, vice, and unreality which the time, age, and France itself exhibited, the Port-Royal of the Solitaires, as distinct from that of the nuns, with its simplicity, love of truth, lack of excitement, and quiet seemed a harbour of peace. Its Enthusiasts looked upon it, indeed, as an asylum or *port*—a sort of quiet backwater, where, after having solved life's enigmas, one could retire and spend the remaining years in contemplation of weathered storms.

"M. de Bascle," says the *Nécrologe*, "after having escaped the shipwrecks of the century, retired to Port-Royal as to a *port*, there to find his salvation in penitence."

On the one hand, therefore, it was, in common with other religious movements, a spiritual balance-wheel; on the other, an economic and social lever. Here the world; there, the gifts of the spirit: Peace, Contentment, Heavenly Aspiration. But the condition attached to the acquirement of Peace, Contentment, and Heavenly Glory was Solitude—long hours of absolute loneliness, relieved by no earthly presence, no human touch, no conversation where mind sets fuse to fellow-mind to produce living thought, or to generate the electric current of sympathy.

"The pleasure of solitude," exclaimed Pascal, "is an incomprehensible matter. I have discovered that all the misfortune of man comes from one thing, which is not to know how to remain in repose in one room."

And only those who loved solitude could find at Port-Royal its heritage—Truth. It was love of Truth which in the beginning inspired Jansenius to create his interpretation of the Word in

the quiet and isolation of the old town of Ypres in Belgium; love of Truth again induced the Abbé de St. Cyran, on his part, to go out into the world, to gather together and practically direct the realization of the brain aspirations of both himself and his friend.

Studying the history of Port-Royal, we marvel to-day in the twentieth century, as did Père Quesnel in the beginning of the eighteenth, that after having sustained the monastery for a hundred years, God should have permitted "this sanctuary of Truth and Charity to have been destroyed like a nest of error by the first ministers of the Church." Yet, though the Enthusiasts of Port-Royal ostensibly failed in their object of reforming the Roman Church from the inside, their attempt went far toward advancing the progress of humanity. A knowledge of their successes and failures should, therefore, be both a lesson and an inspiration. For Art and Religion are, after all, the things that eternally endure. Ever far away from kings and politics, ministers and functionaries, ideals and springs of character lie deep down in the heart of creation where, undisturbed by change of race or dynasty, the Earth Spirit weaves the garment of human life and history.

L. R.

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THE ENTHUSIASTS OF PORT-ROYAL

PART I

EMBRYONIC PORT-ROYAL

1610–1636

CHAPTER I

THE INFANCY OF JANSENISM—HOW A FRIENDSHIP BROUGHT FORTH A RELIGION

"Il faut travailler à réaliser en nous-mêmes notre idéal; sans quoi la vie est une dégringolade continue; et comme les orangs, après avoir commencer par la gentillesse, nous finissons par la brutalité."

PRUDHON

IN the latter days of Henri IV two students, whose friendship was to mean much in the religious history of France, were studying theology in the Belgian town of Louvain. The elder, born in 1581 at Bayonne in Southern France, of distinguished and wealthy parents, was no other than Jean du Verger de Hauranne, afterward famous as the Abbé de Saint-Cyran; the younger, born in 1585 at Arkoy in Holland,[1] near Leerdam, the son of poor and humble people, was Corneille Janssen, no less noted as Jansenius.

Most unlike both in fortune and character, these two young men seemed framed each to complement the other. It is not quite certain when their friendship began, or whether they had more than a casual acquaintance in Louvain, but in this little University centre each of them experienced the influence which decided his later development; here, by different means, both were directed into similar paths of thought.

Even as a youth, Jansenius showed a marked desire for study, and although very poor, managed to get to the University of Utrecht, where he began his higher education under both Catholics and Protestants, studying the Humanities under the former, Rhetoric and Dialectic under the latter,

[1] Or Acquoy. Clémencet in his *Histoire Générale de Port-Royal* (iii. 225) says Jansenius was born at Leerdam itself.

thus early learning the principles and habits of thought of each sect.

Unfortunately, after some time these studies were interrupted by lack of means. To augment his resources, Jansenius was forced to leave Utrecht and work at the first thing that offered—a carpenter's bench. As soon as he had earned enough for his purpose, he went back to Utrecht, and eventually to Louvain, where he continued his studies. At this period he first took the name of Jansenius—*i.e.* son of Jean [1]—and became acquainted with the Jesuits. Tremendously interested in their methods and principles, he begged to be taken into the Order. What was his surprise, however, when, after having accepted his friend, Othon Zilly, whom he himself had converted to Jesuitism, the Society refused his membership, alleging that he was adapted by neither mind, health, disposition, nor constitution to become one of them.[2] While this seeming injustice enraged Jansenius, it was at the same time the means of attracting to him the notice of a learned doctor of Louvain called Jacques Jonsson, a bitter enemy of the Jesuits, and a friend of Baius, the great champion of Grace [3] in the Schools. Through Jonsson and Baius, Jansenius was thenceforth turned from the Jesuits, and interested in St. Augustine, whose tenets these two professors

[1] Clémencet, iii. p. 225.

[2] Rapin, *Histoire de Jansénisme* (Abbé Domenech), p. 8.

[3] "Grace" being the corner-stone, as it were, of Port-Royal, it may be well at the outset to try to explain its meaning. The strict dictionary definition is: "A supernatural gift of God freely bestowed upon man for the merits of Christ" (Blunt, *Dictionary of Theology*, p. 746).

According to St. Augustine, it is: "that which heals the soul from the vice of sin" (*De Spiritu et Lettera*).

St. François de Sales said: "Inasmuch as Divine Love embellishes our soul, it is called Grace, rendering us agreeable to His Divine Majesty" (*Introduction à la Vie dévote*).

In his *Traité sur la Pauvreté*, St. Cyran thus expressed himself: "One could not define Grace in abridgement better than to say it is an empire and a sovereignty over all the things of the world."

Following out this idea, one of the Confessors of Port-Royal defined Grace as "The sovereignty of God over men and the submission of men to God" (*Recueil de Plusieurs Pièces pour servir à l'Histoire de Port-Royal*, p. 199).

Mère Angélique declared: "Grace is humble and the principle of humility. And humility is inseparable from gentleness" (*Mémoires et Relations*, p. 191).

Lastly, according to Pascal, Grace was the second birth of the soul (*Pensées*, p. 359).

taught. Jacques Jonsson is said to have given Jansenius three things which influenced his life :

1. A profound aversion for the Jesuits.
2. An enthusiastic admiration for the Doctor of Grace, St. Augustine.
3. A sympathy for Baius, whom he looked upon as a defender of St. Augustine, and a victim of the Jesuits.[1]

It was after this disappointment with regard to the Jesuits that, being advised on account of poor health to try the milder air of France, in 1604 Jansenius left Louvain and went to Paris.

De Hauranne's experience was quite other than that of Jansenius, principally because his material circumstances were more fortunate. At the age of twenty or twenty-one, he had already had a varied course of study, and was fully embarked on his theological career, having become acquainted with the Humanities in his home at Bayonne, before spending some time at the Sorbonne in Paris. Under these conditions, it was conceivable that his object in visiting Louvain was uniquely because of its University, at that time conceded to be the foremost in Europe. But instead of joining any of the forty-three colleges, in which were assembled over four thousand students from all over the world, or taking advantage of its very noted Faculty of Theology, De Hauranne entered the College of Jesuits. Here he soon gained distinction by his attainments, and when in 1604 he delivered an Essay on Scholastic Philosophy, he attracted the notice of one of the Judges, the celebrated Juste Lipse.

The salient quality of this " King of Humanism," who represented at Louvain the element hostile to the traditional philosophy, was a tremendous depth and breadth of thought, which carried him out and away from orthodox beliefs of his day into the realms of creative imagination. While recognizing the value of Aristotle and the Peripatetics, then considered the only guides in Ethics, or without combating Christianized Aristotelianism or Scholastic

[1] *Jansenius, ses Derniers Moments*, p. 91.

Theology,[1] Lipse wished to introduce the comparative study of all schools:

"If," he exclaimed, "it is necessary to belong to any school, there is but one which I wish to enter, and that is the Eclectic."

A warm friendship gradually grew up between the famous philosopher and the young theological student from Bayonne, and although by some critics the teaching of Lipse is thought to have seduced the latter, Père Rapin tells us that as Lipse himself was affable and civil, he endeavoured to soften and refine his rather uncouth pupil, to sweeten his character as it were by inculcating in him an affection for the humanities "which polish manners."

Lipse's advice was cast on broad lines. Above everything he counselled De Hauranne to curb the native fire of his disposition by the study of the "Divine Science," and to embellish his spiritual life by the wealth of *belles lettres* furnished by the Ancients. In other words, the Good, the True, and the Beautiful were to be combined, and the Early Fathers of the Church to be consulted for principles both of Reform and Renaissance, as well as for a basis of Theology.[2]

In 1605, De Hauranne also left Louvain and went to Paris in pursuit of further knowledge. On arriving there, he and Jansenius met again, and through his influence Jansenius became tutor to the son of a high official, thus earning enough to keep himself while continuing his studies at the Sorbonne. On his part, De Hauranne, not exposed to the same necessities, had leisure for literary and other experiences. The details of the life of neither student at this period are well known, but an incident told of Port-Royal's future director is interesting as marking a contrast in his character and mental development.

The story brings us in familiar contact with Henri IV, who, talking one day with some of the cavaliers of his court, in reminiscence of past experiences in war, put the question

[1] Hallam defines Scholastic Theology as an "endeavour to arrange the orthodox system of the Church such as authority had made it, according to the rules and methods of the Aristotelian dialectics, and sometimes upon premises supplied by metaphysical reasoning" (*Literature of Europe*, vol. i. p. 30).

[2] Rapin, *Histoire du Jansénisme*, p. 36.

as to what they would have done if, losing the battle of Arques, and obliged to put to sea with their leader in a small boat, they had been carried off by the tempest and left to starve. One of the cavaliers replied that he would have killed himself rather than let his liege lord die of hunger. This statement raised a grand debate on the subject of suicide. One of the courtiers, called the Comte de Cramail, brought the matter to his friend De Hauranne for his opinion, and was so charmed by the answers given that he begged their author to write them down. In 1609, therefore, De Hauranne published a pamphlet called :

" Question royale et sa décision,"

in which he not only said that under certain circumstances it is permissible to take one's own life, but that sometimes it is obligatory.[1]

This pamphlet was afterwards unearthed by enemies, and cited against its author. In reality it was simply a youthful indiscretion, such a doctrine as the justification of suicide being entirely contrary to the teachings of St. Augustine. In his *Cité de Dieu*, the latter says expressly that it is not allowable to kill oneself, for thereby one opens the way to the greatest of all evils, sin. It is not known what Jansenius thought of this his friend's first publication, but as it was written before their mutual exhaustive studies, he probably paid no attention to its character.

In any case, each student continued in Paris the tendencies begun in Louvain, and it was a similarity of ideals which finally drew them closely together. In the University of the metropolis they found the teaching less broad than at the Belgian town, and were struck with the fact that the most learned Doctors there did not go back to the Fathers, but were still holding to and teaching the Scholastics. The unsatisfactoriness of this method induced in both Jansenius and De Hauranne a growing desire to revive the true doctrine. Each, therefore, prepared himself to combat the old school, and De Hauranne was about to hold a conference on the " Summary of St. Thomas," when the assassination of Henri IV, by exciting public opinion against the Jesuits, turned thoughts in another direction.

[1] *Question Royale*, p. 32. [2] Book i. p. 29.

This event also determined the future movements of the two friends. De Hauranne decided to return to Bayonne, where the death of his father made his presence necessary at the moment ; and on arrival there, secluding himself in the neighbouring family country house of Champiré or Champirat, on a height overlooking the sea, he devoted himself body and mind to the study of Antique Christianity in general and St. Augustine in particular. It was not long, however, before he felt the need of a congenial companion to share his solitude, and learning of the breakdown in health of Jansenius, he wrote begging the Belgian to come and visit him. On this invitation, Jansenius at once went to Bayonne (1611), and for six years he and his host carried on there an exhaustive study of the Fathers of the Church with the hope of discovering the real sources of the old Christian spirit.[1]

Soon their attention was concentrated on St. Augustine, in whom they felt they had discovered all they had sought; and so great was their enthusiasm for this Saint that they finally determined to devote their lives to the explanation and dissemination of the Augustinian doctrines, which to them seemed to incorporate the whole teaching needed for the regeneration of mankind.

De Hauranne was of course the dominant spirit. His was indeed a rough nature—a characteristic product of that Basque country from which he sprang. In the Jesuit colleges where he was educated, his schoolmates considered him a restless spirit, vain and presumptuous, somewhat fierce and uncommunicative : at best, very eccentric in his manners and habits.[2] Of fine health, great vigour, filled with an insatiable desire for knowledge, regardless of the ill-health and impaired vitality of his companion, he acted on Jansenius like a relentless schoolmaster, prodding his pupil on to more and more labour.

But, in spite of peculiarities which seem the reverse of genial, Jansenius was not, as he himself said, one of those men who are made to be pedants all their lives. Although a somewhat weaker character than De Hauranne, he was at the same time infinitely more human, albeit also distinguished by rugged perseverance and obstinacy. His talent, we are told, lay not so much in Divine illumination as in a peculiar

[1] Clémencet, *Histoire Générale de Port-Royal*, iii. p. 227.
[2] Rapin, *Histoire du Jansénisme*, p. 30.

assiduity in making the most of the light which he had. At times his temper and impetuosity were those of a raging lion :

" I am like inflamed saltpetre, which burns up for an instant, and then dissipates without leaving either odour or smoke," [1]

he said humorously.

The life of the two students was sedentary in the extreme, their only exercise being the game of battledore and shuttlecock, in which they grew very expert, and in which they indulged between two Chapters of the Fathers ! Jansenius' enthusiasm, in fact, became so great that he scarcely ever went to bed at all, but spent his days mostly in an old chair which De Hauranne had had fitted up with cushions and a writing-desk for him.[2] In this seat, he read, wrote, ate, and slept—that is, between times, rarely more than four hours out of the twenty-four. Madame de Hauranne used to say to her son that he would " kill this good Fleming by dint of making him study." [3]

It was therefore fortunate when after a time both scholars became engaged in the world about them, the former being made Canon of the Bayonne Cathedral, the latter Principal of a College founded by the bishop of the town. Even then, they had little intercourse of any kind in the world outside their work, and although neither was a monk, both apparently shunned female society. At first in his own family, and afterwards in his active life as a priest, De Hauranne was necessarily brought into contact with women, all of whom adored while they feared him, but at no epoch of his life did the feminine element seem to have entered into the environment of Jansenius. He indeed fled any personal relationship with the sex, trying even when he was dying to refuse the ministrations of sisters of charity, and confessing that since the age of fifteen he had never been in need of any service from a woman.[4] His idea of the utility of women was evi-

[1] Ellies Du Pin, *Histoire Ecclésiastique du XVII Siècle*, ii. p. 12.

[2] Clémencet, *Histoire Littéraire de Port-Royal*, p. 14.

[3] Clémencet, *Histoire Générale de Port-Royal*, p. 228.

[4] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, vol. ii. p. 93.

Clémencet says in his *Histoire Générale de Port-Royal* (iii. p. 232) : " On ne lui a jamais reproché sur ses mœurs," and this in spite of Père Rapin's scandalous stories of Jansenius' connection with a fascinating *dévote* in Brussels (*Histoire du Jansénisme*, p. 268).

dently akin to that embodied in plain words by the Jesuit Père Garasse :

" Of my fashion of writing I shall say but one word : I try to write concisely, and without disguise of metaphor as much as possible. I know that the thing is not easy, for I believe that it is with metaphors as with women—they are a necessary evil." [1]

In 1617, Jansenius left Bayonne, and went back to Louvain, where he was made Principal of the new College of Holland called " La Pulcherie," and where in 1619 he received his doctor's degree. Leaving Bayonne at the same time, De Hauranne went to Poitiers, where he became Canon of the Cathedral, after which he was made Prior of Bonneville, and finally in 1620 he obtained the Abbey of St. Cyran in Brenne on the frontier of Touraine, Berry, and Poitou. From thenceforth, De Hauranne, Twentieth Abbot of the Monastery, was known as the Abbé de St. Cyran.

As a last remembrance of Jansenius' personality, a comparison has been drawn by Sainte-Beuve between him and St. François de Sales and St. Cyran.[2] If asked, says the historian, what attribute of God struck him most, St. François might characteristically have replied :

" Charity of the Son, Charity, Humility ! "

while St. Cyran's answer would have been :

" Power—that terrible power of the Father ! Abyss ! Eternity ! "

Actually confronted with this question one day, it is chronicled that Jansenius exclaimed :

" Truth ! "

[1] *Port-Royal*, i. p. 303.

The feminine influence was generally shunned by the *solitaires* at Port-Royal, even the Great Arnauld, who upheld Boileau in his Satire on Women, felt with the Satirist that virtuous women were rare, and that it was better to avoid the sex altogether.

" Sans doute, et dans Paris, si je sais bien compter,
Il en est jusqu'à trois que je pourrais citer."

Satire X. *Œuvres*, Boileau.

[2] *Port-Royal*, vol. i. p. 302.

"Truth is what he meditated continually: he sought it night and day in study; and in rare moments of laxness, when he walked in his garden, one could sometimes hear him cry aloud, as with a deep sigh he raised his eyes to heaven: 'O truth! O truth!'" [1]

[1] Clémencet, *Histoire Générale de Port-Royal*, iii. p. 231.

CHAPTER II

THE LETTER OF THE LAW—THE *AUGUSTINUS* OF CORNELIUS JANSSEN

"The Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life," said St. Augustine. " . . . O ye sages of the Academy, is there no certainty that men may grasp for the guidance of life ? Nay, let us seek more earnestly and never despair."

"Le Jansénisme est l'hérésie le plus subtile que le Diable ait jamais tissue."

TO understand the ideas of Jansenius and St. Cyran, we must consider for a moment the circumstances which caused their revolt, and the events of the troubled sixteenth century which preceded them—of that epoch which saw the birth of both Renaissance and Reform, and which has been called the most dramatic in history :

"Two great events dominated and filled it. The Renaissance which illumined and the Reform which soaked it in blood." [1]

A modern French writer [2] analyses the pursuit of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful as the three objects of civilization. In France all would have been well could Renaissance, as typifying the Beautiful, but have united with Reform, anxious to become the incarnation of the Good and the True. Curiously enough these two movements, though originally interdependent, soon began to oppose one another. And whereas at first Reform made use of Renaissance to give it wings with which to fly,[3] it soon combated everything

[1] Comte Leo de Poncy, *Vie de Marguérite d'Angoulême.*

[2] Maulde de la Clavière, *Louise de Savoie et François* 1er.

[3] Through its incitement to a study of the classical tongues, Renaissance also opened the way to an investigation of the Scriptures by laymen, making comparisons between the Catholic faith and the religions and philosophies of other lands possible. Thus, unconsciously, Renaissance produced the revolt called the Reformation.

that Renaissance taught. To its stern votaries, Art and the Beautiful were snares of the Devil. Blinded, moreover, by their hatred of the abuses which had crept into the Roman Church, the first French Reformers could see no difference between Pagan ideology and that of Rome. On the one hand, all the old Pagan gods were huddled together with the row of Saints and Martyrs of the Roman Church, while on the other, majestic and awe-inspiring, Jesus Christ stood alone.[1]

During the long wars of religion which followed the reign of Francis the First, by a policy of sweet and tolerant methods which distinguished acts from intentions,[2] the Roman Church regained the greater part of her former dominion in France. Yet even the submission of Henri IV—his "saut perilleux," as he called it,—could not stifle the revolt, and the beginning of 1600, although signalized by the apparent victory of Catholicism, found the country in a state of religious unrest. For though the practice of the Reform had often been bigoted and narrow in the extreme, its principles were those of that eternal freedom toward which the human mind has ever aspired. Thus, whatever victories the Catholic Reaction, or Counter Reformation, may have entailed to the Established Church, the progress of human thought, once awakened, was ever striving for liberty, and religious emancipation was written on the book of the future in France as elsewhere in the thinking world. In vain had fanatics—themselves also animated, be it said, by true sentiments of loyalty and patriotism—lighted the fires which burned the works of Luther before their beautiful Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris. In vain they had banished Lefèvre, Farel, and Calvin from their native land. The ideals of religious independence taught by these men had survived through a century of war and bloodshed, and were pointing to a freer and more spiritual Catholicity—again to be purified by another Renaissance and another Reform.

On his accession to the throne, three tasks had lain before Henry IV: the re-establishment of authority in the government, of prosperity in the country, and of peace in men's

[1] J. H. Merle d'Aubigné, *L'Histoire de la Réformation du XVI Siècle*, iii. p. 72.

[2] The famous Casuistry afterward combated by Pascal.

minds.[1] During a short twelve years (for it was not until 1598 that both he and France could stop to take breath) this great king had nobly fulfilled the first two requirements. France had nearly recovered from the devastating wars, the throne was all-powerful. As to the third condition—to secure peace, Henri IV had renounced deep religious convictions and vowed to live and die a Catholic At a time when no other country in Europe knew how to practise tolerance, he had brought back the Jesuit to France, and by the Edict of Nantes assured safety to the Huguenots, even allowing the latter to hold office under the government, thus apparently giving religious liberty to France. And yet, although for this heritage of humanity left him by his grandmother, Marguérite d'Angoulême, he paid the price of his life, he had not been able to bring peace to men's minds. The victorious Catholic Church itself was in a state of great danger, all the more menacing because the evil came from within.[2] Its factions were already quarrelling among themselves. The Royal Catholics—or those who had sided with Henri IV against the League—advocated the right of self-government by national churches. The ancient Leaguers, on the other hand, looked upon the Pope as the fountain of ecclesiastical power, and wanted no other dominion. The one represented the Gallican, the other the Ultramontane party.

Properly speaking, the Sorbonne, as acknowledged Judge of the Church, should have settled all theological disputes. But in 1600, like the country and the nobility, weakened by the Wars of the League, the Sorbonne had lost its backbone. The rise of this Faculty of Theology of the Paris University had been very rapid. Founded in the time of Louis IX, shortly afterward, through its introduction of the Scholastic Theology, it had become so famous as to overshadow and lend distinction to the whole University. But since then it had made mistakes. It is true that in 1469 it had been the means of bringing printing into France, yet it had stubbornly opposed the Renaissance,[3] fiercely combated the Reform as well, and justified the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. By this time theological discussions had so invaded the outside

[1] Lavisse et Rambaud, *Histoire de France*, vol. 6. ii. p. 22.
[2] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, vol. i. p. 7.
[3] Cabantous, *Marguérite d'Angoulême et les Débuts de la Réforme*, p. 37.

world that both belief and action seemed paralysed, and scholars began to wonder what indeed the spiritual foundations of Catholicism were. Palpably the store of ancient piety and wisdom underlying its great edifice must still be there, but how revive and vivify it ?

To resolve the problem, three sincere Churchmen, destined during the next fifty years to exercise a tremendous influence in the religious world, met together the year after the murder of Henri IV, when for the moment the star of the Jesuits had paled. Each had his individual idea for the restoration of a pure Catholicism ; each set about in his own way to put it into execution. M. de Bérulle, believing that learned priests could by their example and teaching disseminate the leaven of holiness, founded the Oratory ; M. Vincent de Paul, with the idea of instructing people in the provinces and abroad, instituted the association of missionaries ; M. Bourdoise, to whose mind the remedy lay in reforming the clergy, assembled a new spiritual body of priests in the monastery of St. Nicolas du Chardonnet.[1]

It was eight years later, when Richelieu's star was just appearing on the horizon of the Court, that Jansenius and St. Cyran reached in Bayonne the solution of their inquiry into the cause of the corruption in the Church. Their studies had not by any means led them into a desire to leave the Roman Faith. On the contrary, like that early reformer, Marguérite D'Angoulême,[2] sister of Francis the First, they were alone possessed with a longing to bring about the purification of an institution to which they clung with all their instincts. The cause of the corruption lay, they felt,

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, Discours Préliminaire.

It was at this same epoch that Madame de Chantal, under the inspiration of St. François de Sales, founded the Convent of the *Visitation*, which was also to cope with the corruption of the day by attracting souls through the tender lenient side of Christianity.

[2] If Francis the First brought Italy to France and gave his country that taste and distinction in Letters and the Arts which has since never left it, Marguérite combined in her personality the ideal of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. She had come to the New Religion through the inspiration of Renaissance, and as her ideal was that of maintaining the unity of Catholicism by infusing into it the tenets of the Reform, she was practically a forerunner of the Jansenists, therefore to them the central figure of the sixteenth century. (See the various lives of this princess by Cabantous, Félix Frank, Sainte-Beuve, etc.)

in a strange forgetfulness of earlier stricter principles; the remedy, in a renaissance of the teachings of St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, whose symbol in the ideography of the Roman Church to-day is a flaming heart, his title "Doctor of Grace."

Born in Africa twelve centuries before the era of Jansenius and St. Cyran, this father of the Early Church had fought and won his battle of the soul in the little pagan country of Greece, whence had afterward come the revivifying inspiration toward literature and art. His spiritual development had been through the religion of the Manichees—a material scheme which symbolized spiritual things in the earthly—and by way of Plato, who by appealing to the intellect taught man to look beneath the materialistic. After Plato, examination of the deeper strata of Ethics led him to that high ideal which Christianity stands for.

To use his own words:

"The light of peace was shed upon my heart and every shadow of doubt melted away." [1]

Thus it was through mystic depths that his inner being had blossomed out into the clear radiance of a Christianity ruled over by Divine Grace, and which "understood invisible things by the visible." His dogma was based on the idea of universal guilt as the result of Adam's sin—a guilt which entails on the human race bodily infirmity and death.[2]

Pelagius, an English monk born on the same day as the African Father, and educated in theology originating in Palestine, was the great contemporary opponent of the Augustinian ideas. He denied that the Fall had annihilated Free Will, and contended that Man was able without any assistance to perform the commandments of God. Sin was, therefore, not an infirmity of human nature, but of the will. In thus upholding the greatness of human nature, the Pelagians not only upset the whole scheme of redemption in Christ, but rendered priesthood unnecessary.

To St. Augustine this heresy was most terrible, and it was for combating it and the Pelagians in general that he received the title of Doctor of Grace.[3]

[1] *Confessions*, Book viii. p. 288.

[2] Blunt's *Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology*, p. 558.

[3] Strangely enough in St. Augustine's century, the fourth, the Christian Church was fighting almost the same problems as those facing it again at

Although they were but partially understood, the writings of St. Augustine exercised a great and lasting influence on the early Church.[1] St. Thomas d'Aquin, who lived nine centuries afterward (1227–1274), was the first priest to sustain the Augustinian ideas on Grace and Predestination. His "Summary of Theology" followed the Scholastic method, and his principles were adopted by the Church without any real comprehension of the meaning of the word "Grace."

It is said that after leaving Bayonne, Jansenius became more and more absorbed in the study of St. Augustine, until he neglected his work at the College, and even feared being called to a chair in the University lest it should disturb him in his one preoccupation.[2] He said he could have passed his life agreeably on a desert island with his copy of St. Augustine as his only companion. With characteristic impetuosity, he forgot the necessity of a balance-wheel, and threw himself exclusively into the works of the "Doctor of Grace."[3] Not content with reading all of St. Augustine's writings through once, he read them each ten times, the treatises against the Pelagians thirty times. The outcome of this fascination, almost become an obsession, can be seen in a letter written to St. Cyran in March 1621, wherein he declares his astonishment at the height and breadth of St. Augustine, and the fact that his doctrine is so little known among learned men, not only of his (Jansenius') century, but of past ages. In the same letter, Jansenius confesses that until his ideas are quite formulated he dare not tell any one what he thinks about many subjects of the times, especially Grace and Predestination.[4]

the beginning of the seventeenth. To combat these evils, the Fourth Century Church had fixed its mind on three things:

1. The Christology of revealed religion.
2. Church Authority and Discipline.
3. Human Nature in its relation to Divine Grace.

See Blunt's *Dictionary of Doctrinal Theology*.

[1] A very recent Jansenist historian, Jules Paquier, says: "The writings of St. Augustine and particularly those on Grace have had an influence without parallel in the Latin Church; after the Apostles, he was the great luminary of the Church" (*Le Jansénisme*, p. 39).

[2] It was not until 1630 that the King of Spain made him Professor of Scriptural History in the University of Louvain (Ellies Du Pin, *Histoire Ecclésiastique*, ii. p. 5).

[3] "Which," he said, he read with "un étrange désir et profit."

[4] For Letters of Jansenius, see *La Naissance du Jansénisme découverte*, by le Sieur de Préville.

Not having met since 1617, both Jansenius and St. Cyran had for some time been anxious for an interview in which they could discuss these subjects so near the heart of each. In 1621, when this long-looked-forward-to meeting took place at Louvain, they came to an understanding as to their great project, and the means by which they might propagate the Doctrine of Grace as they understood it. It was decided that in secret Jansenius should prepare an exhaustive work as the basis of principles which St. Cyran should work out in practice. On his part, at this very meeting, St. Cyran dictated the forms and heads of the Chapters for the Letter of their Law to be called the *Augustinus*, and it was agreed, as their combined writings were intended to express a whole, that St. Cyran's pen name should be "Aurelius." Together they thus completed the Latin name of St. Augustine, *Aurelius Augustinus*.

Sainte-Beuve tells a delightfully poetic, if not absolutely historic, story (confirmed by Clémencet) of the next meeting of the friends, two years later, at Péronne, a town on the frontier of Belgium. Here, he says,

"Jansenius arrived on horseback, the evening of 29th April, in order to enter France with the month of May." [1]

Alas! in spite of the love of nature displayed by Jansenius on this occasion, there is little of the gaiety of Spring in the work which the two enthusiasts again discussed in this second interview: it is sombre with the earnestness of November and the falling leaf, and has no hint of the joy of life, or of pure beauty as such. The poetry of existence, indeed, would seem to cling not to its admonitions, but to its mistakes.

After 1623, Jansenius and St. Cyran had other fleeting glimpses of each other, St. Cyran re-visiting Louvain on one occasion, but most of their subsequent intercourse was by letter. For twenty years Jansenius worked on his book, and in writing it he believed his doctrine to be not only sound but orthodox. Twice he submitted it to the Pope, and in the Prologue of the whole work he asserted that he had not taught

"what is true or false, or what one may hold or reject according to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, but what St. Augustine has contended one must believe."

[1] *Port-Royal*, i. p. 303.

In the *Augustinus*, therefore, employing neither the scholastic nor the academic, but the historical method,[1] he endeavoured to recover and demonstrate the doctrine of St. Augustine.

One part of the thick in-folio volume is given over to a history of Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism. The second treats of the state of man before the Fall, and his actual present state. The third goes into a long discussion of possible cure and the Grace administered by Jesus Christ. In his Preface, describing the idea of Pelagius, the author confessed that without very special Divine Grace it would be difficult to avoid being partly seduced at least by the " fatal sweetness " of the doctrine. Later on he turned his criticism, not against the modern Semi-Pelagians—under whom were understood the Jesuits and especially the Molinists [2]—but against Theologians in general, who in their ideas had drifted absolutely away from St. Augustine, and who even while keeping in their hearts as Catholics the Christian faith, had lost sight of everything ennobling from Hope and Nature to Grace—whether of angels or men, and under whatever name soever, sufficient, efficacious, operative, co-operative, predisposing, subsequent or exciting. Insensible to all these things, they followed neither the Old nor the New Testament.[3]

Unhappily, the Latin form of the book and the heated manner of the arguments did not make for clearness, although the style of the work itself is, according to critics, at times

" most brilliant, arresting attention by a sort of theological beauty, of a Miltonian if not a Dantesque depth of sutble thought." [4]

The *Augustinus* was in reality so abstruse that soon Jansenius' enemies contended that he had not understood St. Augustine at all. Moreover, a great deal of this lack of lucidity was attributed to indigestion of the subject-matter. In common with most writers on theology, Montaigne's rather

[1] Which, says Sainte-Beuve, " he accompanied and sought to explain by the psychological and metaphysical Christian method " (*Port-Royal*, ii. p. 99).

[2] Followers of Molina, a Spanish Jesuit, author of a book called *Concord between Grace and Free Will*. In this book Molina sustained that grace never lacked any one and that the Will was always free to receive or reject all the graces.

[3] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, ii. p. 127.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 97.

Rabelaisian advice might with profit have been given to Jansenius :

" Order a purgation for your brain ; it will be better employed than for your stomach." [1]

The greatest crime of which Jansenius was accused was that of putting into the words of his model St. Augustine the principles of pure Calvinism. As Michel le Vassor expressed it :

" Jansenius read St. Augustine with the spectacles of Calvin." [2]

What gave colour to this accusation was the fact that in his *L'Institution Chrétienne,* Calvin cites St. Augustine constantly as his authority on Predestination and other points. Critics overlooked the fact, however, that on leaving the Roman Church, the great Reformer threw off Penitence, the Eucharist, etc., as vain forms, keeping to but " one universal sacrament," that of the Scripture itself. Jansenius, on the contrary, was very tenacious of all the sacraments of the Church, being unorthodox, or rather Gallican, in the one particular alone: his lack of faith in the infallibility of the Pope. It is also very misleading to students of these controversies that confidence in St. Augustine was not confined to Jansenius and Calvin ; the Jesuits also recognized him as sound, and the Papal See never denied the orthodoxy of the Augustinian doctrine. Gibbon saw the incongruity of the dispute, and in his *Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire* said humorously :

" The Roman Church has canonised St. Augustine and crushed Calvin. However, as the difference of their opinions is imperceptible even with the aid of a theological microscope, the Molinists are overwhelmed by the authority of the Saint, and the Jansenists are dishonoured by their resemblance to a heretic. . . ." [3]

In any case, whatever Jansenism appeared to the different sects, its founders intended it to be a pure renaissance of the spirit of the Early Fathers and the ancient dogma and

[1] *Causeries d'un Curieux,* Feuillet de Conches, ii. p. 7.
[2] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal,* ii. p. 106. [3] *Ibid.* p. 105.

authority of Christian tradition. To-day the peculiar interest which attaches to the *Augustinus* is not its literary or moral value, but the fact that throughout the whole seventeenth century, and far into the eighteenth, it created a long and interminable conflict, acting as a sort of ethical leech, which, placed by Doctors of Divinity on the diseased part of Catholicity, drew out innumerable bad humours from its blood. It is safe to say that, had the *Augustinus* never been published, the dogma of Jansenius and St. Cyran might have for ever remained hidden in the schools, and that these two sincere men would have been judged by their acts alone. Its publication was a challenge to the whole religious world of France, and, like the defiance of Luther in the face of the Diet of Worms,[1] such a gauntlet once thrown down had to be taken up by those whose very existence was at stake.

"Truly," as saith St. Augustine, "the Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

[1] Luther said: "I shall defend myself as did Jesus Christ. 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil,' said he. How much more I, who am but ashes and dust, and who can so easily err, should I desire that each avow what he may have against my doctrine" (J. H. Merle d'Aubigné, *Réformation*, ii. p. 249).

CHAPTER III

PORT-ROYAL AND THE ARNAULDS—PORT-ROYAL A THREEFOLD FORCE

"Qui ne connait pas Port-Royal, ne connait pas l'humanité."
ROYER-COLLARD

TO the mind of the average person to-day, Port-Royal has a far-away, dim suggestion of interest and import; but, if questioned concerning it, he would be puzzled to put his vague remembrances into words. And yet in the days of Louis XIII and XIV the name was synonymous on the one hand for all that was heretical, blasphemous, and revolutionary—on the other, everything saintly, erudite, and inspiring.

Like the old religious paintings, Port-Royal was a triptych. The central panel represented Port-Royal des Champs, the two on either side, Port-Royal de Paris, and the Society of Port-Royal respectively. Like a true trinity, these parts are inseparable, and cannot be understood one without the other, for although each depicted a picture of a different scene and history, the same feeling and emotion held the three together. In themselves, these separate organisations possessed the requisites said to be essential to the religious life: emotion, conception, and sentiment;[1] each has left to-day some few but most tangible evidences of its former existence.

Our first concern is with the oldest panel, Port-Royal des Champs, the parent monastery, said to have been founded in 1204 by Mathilde de Garlande, wife of a Montmorency-Marli, who, on going off to the Fourth Crusade, left fifteen thousand livres income to be applied to pious uses. Not

[1] C. P. Tiele, *Elements of the Science of Religion*, ii. p. 22.

long after her husband's departure, Mathilde, in the hope of propitiating the gods toward his safe return and salvation, concerted with the Archbishop of Paris, Eudes de Sully, for the building of a monastery accommodating twelve nuns.[1]

As the generic name of the country thereabouts was Porrois, the monastery founded in 1204 came in course of time to be known as *Port-Roi*, and finally *Port-Royal*.

A more picturesque legend of its foundation was, it was said, discovered by Mère Angélique in the archives of the monastery four hundred years later. This story, written on a slip of paper, but cherished by faithful Port-Royalists, attributes its endowment to the grateful munificence of King Philippe Auguste, who, hunting one day in the great primeval forest then surrounding Paris, becoming separated from his followers just as night was falling, found welcome refuge in a little chapel of St. Lawrence erected on the spot.[2] Hence the appropriate name of *Royal Haven*, or, in French parlance, *Port-Royal*.

One description of Port-Royal says it was situated in a valley, surrounded by "prodigious mountains, the church steeple being lost to view beneath them."[3] This choice of a site was not peculiar, for each of the different monkish orders had its own ideal in this respect. One chose the forest, another the hill, another the valley. St. Bernard, who became the patron saint of the new monastery of *Porrois*, prescribed the depth of a profound valley, such as that of the river Yvette, for his monks or nuns, as from thence they could not look out on the world, but were necessarily obliged to keep their eyes fixed on heaven.[4]

According to an eighteenth-century historian, Port-Royal was built on the banks of a large pond nearly filling the valley of the river Yvette, only six leagues from Paris, on the road to Chevreuse, and near Versailles. A dyke served as

[1] Clémencet, *Histoire Générale de Port-Royal*, p. 2. And here at the outset it is as well to explain that neither the historians of Port-Royal, nor the Port-Royalists themselves, ever call their institution a *convent*, but always either *Abbey* or *Monastery*. The reason for this is not known (Sainte-Beuve, i. 37).

[2] Lancelot, *Mémoires touchant la Vie de M. de St. Cyran*, ii. p. 451.

[3] From the *Relation* of a Visit to Port-Royal in 1698, quoted by M. André Hallays in his recent *Pélerinage de Port-Royal*, p. 102.

[4] Tronchay, *Abrégé de l'Histoire de Port-Royal*.

a cloister, while the waters of the pond, passing through the garden, formed a canal. At all epochs, this swampy pool seems to have been the evil genius of the monastery, for, frequently overflowing into the canal, it filled the precincts with malarial stenches and poisonous vapours.

In shape the early conventual buildings formed a square, with a large court in the middle. This court was ornamented by a dove-cot, a few trees here and there, a great elm in the centre. The earliest church was a fine old thirteenth-century edifice, dedicated to Notre-Dame, and built in the form of a Latin cross by Robert de Luzarches, architect of Amiens Cathedral. In one corner, an altar preserved the name and memory of Philippe Auguste's sheltering chapel of St. Lawrence.

Having in those days no protecting walls, the abbey was quite open and exposed to the depredations of any chance passer-by. From its foundation in 1204, until the Reform in 1609, therefore, Port-Royal passed through many physical as well as spiritual changes, its history being entirely lost during the wars with the English in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. That reform was very much needed as early as the beginning of the sixteenth century, is proved by an existing *carte-de-visite*, or Cartulary—a report made by the Superior of the Abbey on his regular visits there. By this card, it is apparent that the monastery had no dormitory, and that the law of seclusion was not practised, while its recommendation of a better recitation of the Prayers to Notre-Dame, the patron, also a clock for greater punctuality in the hours of Divine service, is significant. The directions with regard to dress, confession, etc., all pointed to laxness of moral discipline.[1]

About this time, some slight economic reform in the matter of the limits of the monastery was undertaken in turn by two Abbesses, aunt and niece respectively, both named Jehanne de la Fin. The first Jehanne added the farm on the heights above the abbey called Les Granges, and after her, Jehanne the second—evidently a lover of beauty—had the church repaired, made over the bell tower, and presented some very fine sculptured choir stalls. The epitaph of

[1] See Guilbert, *Mémoires Historiques et Chronologiques de Port-Royal*, i. 187–196.

this Abbess, a play on her name, was short and to the point :

" La fin couronne l'œuvre."

A second *carte-de-visite*, dated some seventy years later,[1] records a still graver moral laxness among the nuns of Port-Royal, encouraged by the corruption of the Abbess, Catherine de la Vallée. Fortunately, this lady, becoming frightened of the dangers entailed during the wars of the League by Port-Royal's close proximity to Paris, at last fled to another Cistercian convent called Colinance.

It was under the rule of Catherine de la Vallée's successor, La Dame Boulehart, who maintained matters much as she had found them, neither better nor worse, that in the last year of the sixteenth century an event occurred which brings us into touch with our immediate subject. This was the nomination as coadjutrice, of a young girl only seven years and a half old, destined to be Port-Royal's future Abbess and Reformer.

In those days, the religious life was an easy manner of settling the future fate of female members of rich and influential families, for on buying an abbey, or installing his daughter in a convent or monastery, the father was thereafter absolved from further care or thought in her regard. Thus the monastical profession had become a matter of material, not spiritual import, and such institutions showed a deplorable moral degeneration.

La Dame Boulehart's young coadjutrice belonged to a family claiming noble blood, and originating in Auvergne. It has been said that the Arnaulds have the distinction of characterizing Port-Royal :

" Port-Royal is the Arnaulds ; the Arnaulds are Port-Royal."

In Catherine de Médécis' time, the head of this important clan was M. Antoine Arnauld, like his father before him, Procureur-Général to the Queen, and a gentleman renowned for his fine mind and attainments. Later on, when so many descendants of this patriarch became nuns and *solitaires* at Port-Royal, the imputation of Calvinism was cast by enemies

[1] 17th September 1572. *Ibid.* pp. 198–202.

on M. Arnauld père, but this was untrue, he in reality having always been a good and most enthusiastic Catholic.

In a *Study on the History of the Ancient French Magistracy*,[1] he has been described as a

"man of the world and a Christian, uniting ambition and piety, soliciting at the court offices for his eldest son, at Rome abbeys for his daughters, still children. He walked in the ways of salvation, without turning aside from those of fortune."

Selling his office on the death of Catherine de Médécis, M. Arnauld devoted himself to the law, and toward the end of the sixteenth century became famous by an act facetiously termed the "original sin of the Arnaulds." This was a most heated and eloquent brief delivered in the University of Paris against the Jesuit, Pierre Barrière's attempted murder of Henri IV in 1594. With inartistic vehemence, M. Arnauld denounced the Jesuits as :

"Thieves, corruptors of youth, assassins of kings, sworn enemies of the State, pests of Republics, and disturbers of the public repose." [2]

Not content with overwhelming the objects of his scorn with these epithets, the impassioned orator further denounced them as meriting not only to be chased out of Paris, the court, and the kingdom, but to be entirely cleared away and exterminated from the face of the earth.

So intense was the general indignation over this outrage attributed to the Jesuits, that Parliament thereupon demanded the expulsion of the whole Society from France, and the lenient Henri IV was compelled to yield to the moment's pressure. That the University believed the gaining of their point due to their orator's eloquence, is proved by the fact that they made a resolution vowing to him and his posterity eternal gratitude.[3]

Such excess of enthusiasm as this celebrated brief displayed, was but characteristic of the judicial oratory of the day, when Renaissance learning had turned to pedantry, and rhetoric suffered from the universal adoration of the

[1] Sapey, C. A., p. 189.
[2] *Plaidoyé de M. Antoine Arnauld*, 12 *et* 13 *Juillet*, 1694.
[3] In an Act of 18th March 1595. See Guilbert, *Mémoires*, i. 234.

antique. Antoine Arnauld was, in fact, much given to interlarding his speeches with classical allusions, owing to a habit with which Tallemant des Réaux credits him,[1] of pasting into copy books whole passages from other authors, and classifying them for quotation and use. Indeed, he was often apt in his pleadings to forget the subject in hand and let his mind wander to something quite foreign. The story is told that on one occasion, when carrying on a suit against a Genovese Huguenot in a case of confiscation, going into a long dissertation on the misdeeds of the citizens of Genoa against France, flanked by a discussion of Andrea Doria, he was finally recalled to the matter in hand by the Genovese Huguenot himself. Turning to the other advocates, the indignant Italian demanded :

" Gentlemen, what have the Republic of Genoa and Andrea Doria to do with me and my money ? " [2]

In spite of this inflated rhetoric, these *maitresses voiles* of eloquence, as his son Robert called them, Antoine Arnauld was conceded to have been a most perfect advocate, his popularity among princesses and the nobility generally being unbounded.

Early in his career he had married the twelve-year-old daughter of M. Simon Marion, also an eloquent orator and advocate, afterward Président des Enquêtes, and finally Avocat-Général. Mlle Marion not only brought her husband a large dot, in which was included the fine estate of Andilly, but she soon exhibited strong character and great influence. Later on M. de St. Cyran described her as

" a soul truly solid and built upon the rock." [3]

With such sterling qualities in both father and mother, the children of this union could not fail to have been striking characters. But of the twenty infants born to M. and Madame Arnauld, only ten survived to reach mature age. When these ten grew up, however, their maternal grandfather, no less ambitious than their father, in the matter of family advancement, was anxious to settle them all well in life.

[1] *Historiettes*, vol. iv. p. 60.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Letter to Mère Angélique, 15th March 1641.

The eldest, a son Robert, was from the first designed by his father for the world. He was well launched in his career by two influential uncles, and soon managed to gain such considerable reputation for finance as at an early age to be made assistant to M. Schomberg, Intendant of Finance. Like his father, Robert Arnauld made a happy marriage, and his wife, who was the daughter of a celebrated Ambassador of Henri IV, brought him the well-known estate of Pomponne. On this occasion, too, his father transferring to him the family country seat, he was thereafter known as Robert Arnauld d'Andilly. Although connected with Port-Royal from his early manhood, M. d'Andilly did not definitely retire to the monastery until he was fifty-eight years old. For twenty-seven years he played the part of link between Port-Royal and the outside—a rôle for which his vast experience of the different aspects of life generally, his close alliance with the Court, made him perfectly fitted.

The next eldest of M. Arnauld's four sons was the Abbé de St. Nicolas, eight years younger than Robert, who eventually became Bishop of Angers, and also noted in religious circles, though not until the Peace of the Church in connection with Port-Royal.

Six years younger still was the third son, Simon Arnauld, the only one who, as Sainte-Beuve says, had not time to disengage himself from the world. Simon Arnauld was described by his nephew the Abbé Arnauld as

"born with many good qualities, without any considerable vice; well made in his person, of a very affable and sweet humour, agreeable among women, proud when necessary among men." [1]

Lieutenant des Carabins in a cousin's regiment, this dashing soldier, in spite of his fine qualities, seems to have been born under an unlucky star, for he could never secure advancement in his profession, and was killed at the age of thirty-six in the siege of Verdun.

Last on the family list, and twenty-four years Robert d'Andilly's junior, came the fourth son, Antoine, afterwards famous as the *Grand Arnauld*. The testimony of contemporaries does not show this future doctor of the Sorbonne as

[1] *Mémoires*, Ed. Petitot, vol. xxxiv. p. 186.

physically attractive. Apparently he was small, dark, and ugly. His nephews called him "le petit oncle," because he was younger than the eldest among them, Antoine Le Maitre. Mentally, however, he made up for all physical imperfections. Sainte-Beuve says he was :

"One of the most active, original, and characteristic persons of his time—a symbol of ardour and candour." [1]

And what a face his portrait shows ! The brightness of eyes illuminate features which betray such sensibility that it is hard to recognize in their possessor the rude fighting qualities attributed to the "Defender of the Truth." Essentially the scholar in his countenance and personality, Antoine Arnauld's fate was continual struggle, his life-history during the so-called second Port-Royal a tale of exile and hardship.

The eldest of Antoine Arnauld's six daughters, Catherine, had early made what was supposed to be a brilliant marriage. Unfortunately, she soon learned that her husband, Isaac Le Maitre, King's Councillor and Maître des Comptes, was unworthy in every respect. For seven years she suffered in proud silence both his immorality and his cruelty, but finally, falling ill, she confessed all to her mother ; and, after a great deal of trouble, M. Arnauld succeeded in procuring a separation for his daughter. Her five sons, too, he was able to save from the control of their father, who, to retain his rights to his children, even declared himself to belong to the Reformed Religion. Only twenty-six years of age at the time of her trouble, Madame Le Maitre devoted herself thenceforth solely to the education of her sons, leading a most useful and saintly life. Eventually she, too, found a refuge at Port-Royal.

The other five daughters were nuns. The youngest, Madeleine-Christine, commonly called "Madelon," was in early childhood a stubborn rebel, who, when her sister Angélique begged her to become a nun, replied that she wished to marry. Angélique prayed fervently for the salvation of the little one, and behold one night Madelon had a vision, in which, appearing before her, her own Sainte-Madeleine called her into the desert. Although the family laughed at Madelon's instant decision to become a nun, the child per-

[1] *Port-Royal*, ii. p. 172.

sisted, and finally went to Port-Royal. Always a great invalid, Madelon astonished her sisters by her patience under continual suffering, endured for forty-two years.

" Am I not very happy, and has not God shown me much grace that I am not a moment without suffering either in body or mind ? " she asked.[1]

The next youngest girl, Marie-Claire, became identified with Port-Royal from her seventh year. The story is told that having the small-pox at this early age a preservative was administered which destroyed her beauty. Herself realizing the change, and putting her hand up before the unfamiliar image looking at her from the mirror, Marie-Claire would exclaim piteously :

" Ah ! ce n'est plus moi ! ce n'est plus moi ! " [2]

Timid, delicate, but passionate and affectionate, this sister clung with steadfast pertinacity to Mère Angélique. Her great forte from the beginning was prayer, and because she was so zealous in this form of devotion as to be continually in the church, Mère Angélique called her

" One of the pillars of our choir."

On the occasion of some celebration when the whole monastery had spent the entire day in the chapel, Marie-Claire, who was Mistress of the Novices, came to Mère Angélique and asked naïvely what they must do, as the novices

" had not had time to pray to God, all the day having been spent in church." [3]

Marie-Claire's life was thus a simple history of devotion to her God, devotion to her sister. Living to be forty-two, her health was so impaired by the hardships encountered during a long sojourn at Maubuisson with Mère Angélique, that for twenty-two years she confessed to have had fever the whole afternoon of every day. When at last this brave nun died, she was buried according to an old religious custom the same evening, in pious simplicity, without flowers, beautiful linen, or illumination. Marie-Claire, it was said, had loved penitence too well in life not to preserve the marks of it after death.[4]

[1] Besoigne, *Histoire de Port-Royal*, i. 301.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 211. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.* p. 217.

Six years older, Anne-Eugénie Arnauld was the romantic spirit among the sisters. Full of pride and haughtiness, she used to spend her days in the park at Andilly, reading novels so deeply absorbing in their tales of love and life that oft-times, overtaken by a storm, she would let the thunder and lightning play upon her unperceived. Taste for the world was very strong in this girl of fourteen. Moreover, greatly influenced by Calvinistic cousins, she found it difficult to decide which faith to choose. Then, suddenly, at nineteen, during the climax of an attack of smallpox, she vowed, if God would save her, to serve Him thenceforth in the better of the two religions. As she knelt one day with her mother in the family chapel of St. Lawrence in the church of St. Merry, her doubt was resolved, and a great and irrepressible desire seized her to become a nun. Remaining a year longer in the world as a test of this resolution, in 1616 she finally entered Port-Royal, where she voluntarily served in the kitchen, performing the most menial tasks, which she said gave her

" more joy and pleasure than she had ever had at the Comedy and in the greatest amusements." [1]

When, two years later, the convent doors closed upon this daughter for ever, M. Arnauld, senior, declined to be present at the ceremony, alleging that it moved him too greatly. Anne-Eugénie, however, was in a state of such exaltation that when the day after her profession the nuns were weeping Mère Angélique's departure for Maubuisson, she alone remained tearless :

" God gave me too many benefits yesterday," she said, " for me to weep to-day."

Reminded on her death-bed thirty-seven years afterward of the joys she had then experienced, Anne-Eugénie again became radiant, repeating verbatim the vows of her profession as readily as if made only the week before.[2]

Though all the Arnaulds were connected more or less closely with the monastery, it is through the next two daughters that we first approach it, they who were most intimately associated with the reform and lifelong history of the whole

[1] *Mémoires et Relations*, p. 35. [2] *Ibid.* p. 39.

movement; they who represent the finest and most living period of Port-Royal's growth and influence.

The elder, born in 1591 and called Jacqueline, became the celebrated Mère Angélique: Jeanne, two years younger, was scarcely less renowned as Mère Agnès de Saint-Paul.

Though not a thorough materialist, being, on the contrary, a zealous churchman of the Gallican type,[1] M. Antoine Arnauld seemed particularly anxious to settle the future of these two daughters. A story is told by the historian Clémencet that when in their early childhood the sisters were both told by their grandfather that they were to be nuns, the elder, of whom M. Marion was particularly fond, replied:

"My grandfather, since you wish me to be a nun, I wish it too, but on condition that I shall be an abbess."

One day, however, with serious face, she went in search of M. Marion, who was in his study. On asking her what she wanted, the child replied:

"My grandfather, I have come to tell you that I do not want to be an abbess, for I have heard it said that abbesses must render account to God for the souls of their nuns, and I have enough to do to care for my own."

Her sister Jeanne (Agnès), who had followed her, on hearing this, broke in, and announced brusquely:

"I want to be one, grandfather, and I shall take care to make them do their duty." [2]

Jacqueline was but seven years of age when, by her father's and grandfather's efforts and credit, she was made coadjutrice of the Abbey of Port-Royal, under an abbess whose age and infirmities gave every reason to believe that from coadjutrice the child might soon become Abbess. For the younger sister, Jeanne, the Abbey of St. Cyr was obtained. Both girls were so young, however, that before taking up these important positions, it was necessary they should be instructed in the religious life. After benediction at the Abbey of St. Antoine des Champs in Paris, therefore, Jacqueline, taking the novice's dress, spent eight months in

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, i. p. 74.
[2] *Histoire Générale de Port-Royal*, i. p. 13.

her sister's Abbey of St. Cyr. Here, in 1600, Jeanne also took the robe of the novice, it being understood that although from that time virtually Abbess of St. Cyr, she should not fulfil her abbatial duties until she was twenty years old. In 1600, the girls were separated, Jeanne remaining at St. Cyr, Jacqueline being placed in the Cistercian Abbey of Maubuisson under Madame Angélique d'Estrées, its Abbess.

On entering Maubuisson, Jacqueline changed her name to Angélique, choosing this appellation not only out of compliment to Madame d'Estrées, but also in order to conceal her true age from the papal authorities. In October, her noviciate having expired, she made her profession, remaining two years longer at Maubuisson until the Abbess of Port-Royal died, when, under the impression that M. Arnauld's daughter was seventeen, the Pope confirmed her appointment, and Madame Angélique was at once installed at Port-Royal des Champs. In reality, the new Abbess was not quite eleven years of age.[1]

Thus began the life-history of that great character who was to institute an epoch-making reform, and who even now, after the lapse of three centuries, stands out as *la grande Angélique*. During seventy years of charity and self-denial, this heroine, mother and martyr of the first Port-Royal, had full opportunity to test the truth of her own saying :

" Affliction, pain, and evil are more necessary to us than bread." [2]

[1] Racine, *Abrégé de l'Histoire de Port-Royal*, p. 2.
[2] *Mémoires et Relations*, p. 270.

CHAPTER IV

MÈRE ANGÉLIQUE'S CONVERSION AND THE REFORM OF PORT-ROYAL DES CHAMPS

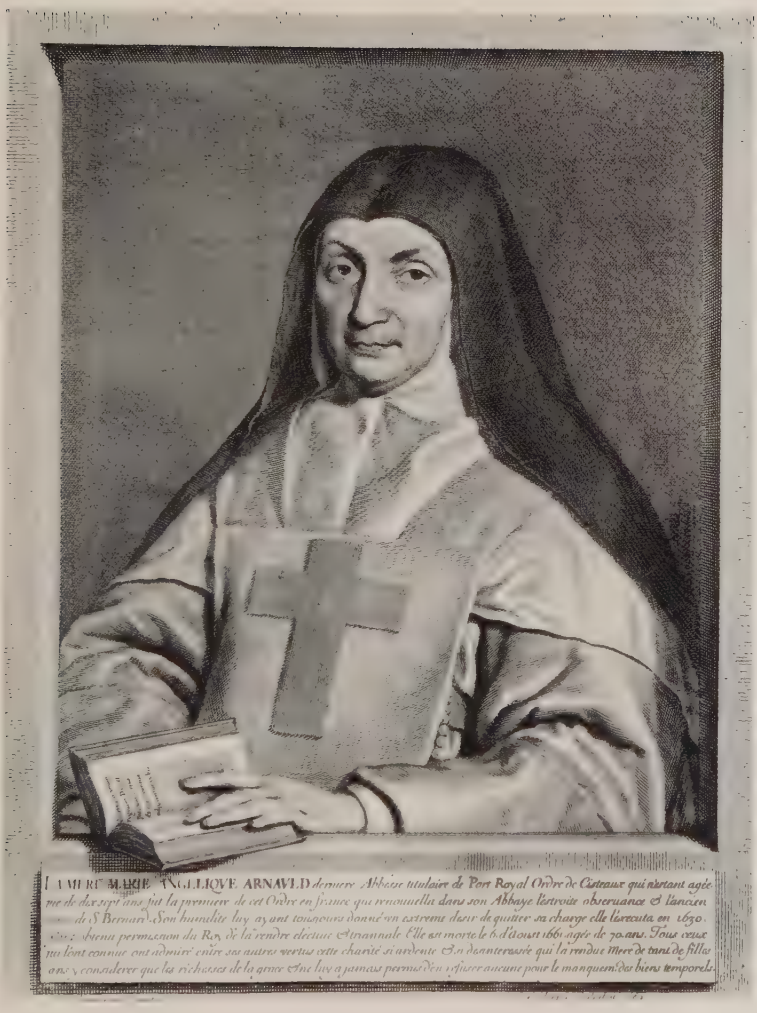
"No man in this corrupt state of nature can resist Divine Grace operating upon the soul."

One of the Five Propositions said to be contained in the *Augustinus*

THERE exists a graphic description of the deplorable moral condition of the Abbey when Mère Angélique was put in possession. Its thirteen nuns comported themselves in the same manner as those of other convents, wearing gloves and masques like ladies of fashion, and leading lives in which true religion had no part. Their confessor, a Bernardine monk, was so ignorant that he did not understand the meaning of the *Pater* he mumbled out; the Catechism was unintelligible to him, and the only book he ever opened was his Breviary. Instead of taking his exercise in solitary walks of religious meditation, he openly delighted in the carnal pleasure of the hunt. Other Bernardine monks who visited the Abbey from time to time entertained the nuns by telling them of the amusements at other abbeys—distractions which they called "les bonnes coutumes de l'Ordre." [1]

Preaching, too, had gone out of fashion, and for thirty years the only sermons delivered had been on the occasion of seven or eight professions. Moreover, both nuns and confessor had so little respect for the Sacrament of the Holy

[1] "La règle de St. Benoit n'y était presque plus connue, et l'esprit du siècle en avait entièrement banni la regularité. Onze religieuses dont trois étaient imbéciles et deux novices composaient toute la maison, lorsque la Mère Angélique Arnauld succéda à Jeanne de Boulehart" (Clémencet, i. p. 11).



MÈRE ANGÉLIQUE, ABBESS AND REFORMER OF PORT ROYAL

FROM VAN SCHUPPEN'S ENGRAVING OF THE PORTRAIT BY PHILIPPE DE CHAMPAGNE

Eucharist that it had come to be administered but once a month, or on the great festivals of the Church, and then perfunctorily and hastily. The Feast of the Purification had been struck off the list of celebrations altogether, owing to the exigencies of carnival time, when confessors, servants, and nuns alike were occupied in preparations for masquerades and other merry-makings.[1]

Fearful for Mère Angélique's youth and inexperience, the Arnauld family kept strict watch over her Abbey and its inmates. But nothing occurred to disturb their peace of mind. Although the young Abbess joined in the frivolous habits of her nuns to a great extent, for five years time passed uneventfully for her. Gradually, however, Madame de Port-Royal grew to have a great distaste and even dislike for her vocation. Unhappy, restless, and discontented, instead of seeking consolation and help in prayer, she turned for distraction to such profane books as Plutarch's *Lives*, and similar ungodly works. At fifteen, indeed, she conceived the serious idea of leaving Port-Royal. As she expressed it:

"I deliberated in myself to leave Port-Royal and to return to the world without warning my father and my mother, in order to withdraw myself from the yoke which was unendurable to me, and to marry." [2]

She went so far as to think of throwing herself on the protection of some Huguenot relations at La Rochelle. This resolution was frustrated seemingly by the hand of God, for on the eve of its execution the rebellious Angélique was stricken down with a terrible fever. At once her father carried her off to Andilly to recover, and here during her illness she was visited by different members of her family, notably two magnificent aunts, who, approaching her bed in their rustling gowns of satin and velvet, awakened in their sequestered niece a latent desire for finery.[3]

On convalescence, however, she returned to the monastery in a more resigned frame of mind, and suddenly the miraculous happened—that unexpected, unforeseen trifle which in reality changed the whole current of existence, rendering the inex-

[1] Poullain, *Histoire Abrégé de Port-Royal*, p. 4.
[2] *Mémoires et Relations*, p. 125.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 126.

perienced girl a matured spirit, rich in piety, firm in purpose, strong to reform herself and those about her.

This miracle was nothing less than the descent upon her head of what the Jansenists called " God's Sovereign, Infallible Grace," the medium of its appearance only a poor monk called Père Basile, in reality a notoriously corrupt priest of immoral influence. Knocking at the gate of Port-Royal one night, this travelling Capuchin asked if he might preach there. Although it was late, the young Abbess consented, rather glad to welcome any change in the monotony of her life.

The Capuchin's subject dealt with the benefits of the religious profession, the Rule of St. Benoit, and the different abject humiliations suffered by the child Christ in the cradle. It is doubtful if Mère Angélique heard or understood his words, and yet during this sermon, preached [1] in the dim torchlight of the chapel, she was suddenly transformed from a nun tired of her vocation into a religious enthusiast. The Divine Fire had touched her, and albeit months of anguish and struggle lay before her, her Renaissance and that of Port-Royal were determined that night. And thus, in 1609, two years before the meeting of those illustrious Churchmen anxious to find a remedy for degeneration in the Church, the seventeen-year-old Abbess of Port-Royal des Champs had begun in her ancient Cistercian monastery the reform which was afterward to respond to the ideas of the two students, Jansenius and St. Cyran, at that time only just becoming acquainted in Louvain.

The sincere Reformer was too astute to at once attempt the siege of that greatest citadel of the human heart—personal vanity, a sin deep-rooted in the Port-Royal nuns. Herself dressing in coarse serge, she refrained from demanding of these ladies of high birth and position, as elegant and worldly as any of the *grandes dames* of the Court, to give up their costly robes cut in the extreme of the prevailing fashion, their long sleeves, etc., but accomplished her desire gradually through general exhortation and the force of her own example. Within five years the struggle was won, and the strictest vows of the Rule of St. Benoit literally carried out: poverty, silence, fasting, abstinence from meat, watching at night, and lastly seclusion.[2]

[1] In Lent 1608.

[2] Racine, *Abrégé de l'Histoire de Port-Royal* (Edition Gazier), p. 4.

It was in the fulfilment of this latter vow that the courageous Superior had her greatest and most decisive battle. Through it she came into collision with her family, notably her father, the redoubtable Antoine Arnauld, who now held the high position of Avocat-Général of France, having succeeded his father-in-law, M. Marion. Necessarily somewhat of an autocrat at home, M. Arnauld was so feared by his daughters, and even by his wife, that they either neglected or were afraid to tell him of Mère Angélique's determination to enforce her vow of seclusion to the point of refusing to admit her mother, sisters, and—horrible to relate—him who had not only given her her Abbey, but had been constant in his favours to the whole community. It was therefore quite without warning that he suddenly found himself pitted against the firm piety of his daughter.

One day in September 1609, Mère Angélique awaited a visit from her parents, and the nuns were all in the refectory at an early dinner, when they heard a carriage drive into the exterior courtyard. In this vehicle were five persons : M. and Madame Arnauld, M. d'Andilly, Madame Le Maitre, and Anne-Eugénie. Matters had been previously arranged inside the convent : doors locked, keys removed, etc., and on the first warning noise of the wheels, Mère Angélique, who had been praying alone in the church, advanced to the cloister gate, upon which M. Arnauld was already knocking.

Opening the wicket, she refused her father entrance into the inner precincts, begging him to step into the ante-room adjoining, where she could talk with him through the grating, and explain her reasons for not admitting him. Having always considered himself in the light of a benefactor to the whole community, M. Arnauld grew mad with rage at this unheard-of conduct on the part of his daughter, and a fearful scene ensued, in which some of the *religieuses* took part against their Abbess.

To give the result in epitome, the outcome of the famous *Journée du Guichet* (Wicket Day), as it was called, was victory for firmness of conscience as represented by Mère Angélique, and of capitulation on the side of tender authority, incorporated in the persons of a family conquered by the sight of their poor enthusiast suffering human exhaustion from the violence she herself put upon strong natural

emotions. A compromise was made, whereby the family, with the sanction of the Abbé des Citeaux, Director of the monastery, were thenceforth allowed to enter any part of the Abbey, except the cloister.

It was not long after the reform of Port-Royal that the force of Mère Angélique's life and example had attracted to the Abbey many other Abbesses from all parts of the country, some staying years at Port-Royal in order to learn the holy maxims taught there. Gradually the General of the Order grew into the habit of sending Mère Angélique and her nuns to other Cistercian institutions which needed reform.[1] The worst of these Abbeys to which Mère Angélique went personally, was that in which she herself had been trained—Maubuisson. No other than the sister of the beautiful Gabrielle d'Estrées, the Abbess of this monastery had long been setting an example of riotous living to her nuns, and when her patron Henri IV died, the General of the Order at once had her removed and taken to the Convent of the Filles Pénitentes in Paris. The history of her various escapes from prison, of the long years spent in fruitless attempts to regain the Abbey, of money being squandered to that end; until at last she died in misery and loneliness—all would be a novel in itself. Mère Angélique's experiences at Maubuisson, too, were startling, and richly justified her fears on starting out, when she had told her nuns that the going was a question of sacrificing not only health but life itself. Still, she was not affrighted, so, leaving Mère Agnès behind as *Sous Prieure* and head of the monastery during her absence, she set out, taking with her two or three of her own nuns—among them her young sister, Marie-Claire. Unfortunately, she had scarcely been there a year, when, making a most dramatic escape from the Filles Pénitentes, Madame d'Estrées, accompanied by powerful cavaliers of the Court, returned to her former Abbey and forced an entrance. Although in a few days she was again seized and conducted back to the Filles Pénitentes, the venom of Madame d'Estrées was not exhausted; many times afterwards she managed to escape her gaolers, and with her friends so menaced the peace of the Abbey, that for months Mère Angélique was obliged to keep a guard of a hundred archers to protect the Abbey from assault.

[1] Racine, *Abrégé*, p. 5.

One of the happy results of the Maubuisson sojourn was a relationship formed with St. François de Sales, that most famous example in all the annals of the Church for sweetness and tenderness of heart. Happening to be in France for a short time in 1619, and hearing of the courageous reformer of Maubuisson, St. François visited the Abbey for the express purpose of making her acquaintance. So impressed was Mère Angélique with the gentle priest during the first interview that she begged him to act as Director to herself and the nuns under her charge. Until meeting him, she admitted, she had never found the unique mentor she was in search of, but had been obliged to gather counsel here and there.

"Ah!" said St. François, "why trouble about that? Surely there is no harm in seeking on several flowers the honey one fails to find on one only."

"I admired his advice," confessed Mère Angélique, "although I should have found it dangerous to follow it." [1]

In her *Mémoires*, Mère Angélique confesses that if St. François had remained in France she would have gained a great deal from his counsels, which were, she said, not so soft and sweet as most people imagined. An insight into human nature and a tremendous tact made St. François appear lenient to the outside world, but to those, like Mère Angélique, in whom he had confidence, he was sternness itself, pardoning nothing in souls vowed to the truth.

"He returned to his diocese," wrote Mère Angélique, "and I remained three years longer in that house (Maubuisson). . . . As long as he lived, I continued to write him of my plans, and he took the trouble to reply to me with great care and extreme kindness." [2]

Thus Sainte-Beuve calls the whole first epoch of Port-Royal after its reform the "Period of St. François de Sales," describing the spirit of the author of *L'Amour de Dieu* and *L'Introduction à la Vie dévote* as

"affectionate, sweet, amorous, and expansive."

That all her life Mère Angélique revered St. François, is

[1] *Mémoires et Relations*, p. 53. [2] *Ibid.* p. 55.

proved by the letter she wrote on her death-bed to Anne of Austria :

" It was this holy prelate, Madame," she said, " who knew better than any other the depths of my heart, and from whom I tried to learn the veritable spirit with which one should inspire souls who leave the world to consecrate themselves to God."

On his part, St. François basked in the happiness of giving out so much to these yearning souls, and to him Port-Royal became, as he expressed it, his " chères délices." [1]

[1] Du Fossé, *Mémoires*, ii. p. 74.

CHAPTER V

MEETING WITH ST. CYRAN—FOUNDATION OF PORT-ROYAL DE PARIS

" Il brûle d'arroser cet arbre précieux (la Croix)
Où pend pour nous le fruit le plus chéri des Cieux."
CORNEILLE

MÈRE ANGÉLIQUE was still at Maubuisson when Fate struck the fore-note of the event which was to be of great moment to both her and Port-Royal.

In 1620, accompanying the Court on an official errand (he was then Assistant to the Intendant of Finances, M. Schomberg) southward, Robert d'Andilly met at Poitiers the Abbé de St. Cyran. Being of an extremely individualistic nature, this eldest Arnauld had always seemed to experience a necessity for continually giving out affection, and, like the true enthusiast he was, it was generally his last fancy which most engrossed him.[1] And now, for some reason or other, his inflammable sympathy at once rushed out toward the learned Abbé, then thirty-seven years old, and seven years older than himself, and in the first flush of his enthusiasm he unknowingly performed a great service to Jansenism by introducing St. Cyran to his sister, Mère Angélique. The latter must have been immediately attracted by the personality of her new acquaintance, for, in a letter written shortly afterward, she thanked her brother for having given her "the happiness of so holy a friendship." But when, in

[1] The Abbé Arnauld, eldest son of Robert, wrote rather bitterly of this peculiarity of his father's, saying that although he loved his friends extremely, new friendships had preference over old. "It is easy to judge by this," he continued, "that his children were not what he most loved" (*Mémoires*, Petitot, p. 123).

1621, St. Cyran visited Port-Royal des Champs for the first time, it was not to see the Abbess, but his old friend, her mother, Madame Arnauld.

After Mère Angélique had been some four years at Maubuisson, Louis XIII appointed Madame de Soissons, natural sister of the first Duchesse de Longueville, its new Abbess. This appointment pleased Mère Angélique, who was most anxious to return to her beloved Port-Royal. But as the papers of Madame de Soissons were very long in arriving, for thirteen months still departure was impossible.

Meanwhile, some slight misunderstanding had arisen between Madame de Soissons and Mère Angélique with regard to the latter's accepting so many poor girls without dowry into Maubuisson, and this criticism was repeated in many quarters.

"I reply to this complaint," wrote Mère Angélique, "that if a house with an income of thirty thousand livres is considered to be burdened with thirty nuns, I would not esteem ours, which has only six thousand livres, incommoded in receiving them." [1]

Full of divine charity and compassion, Mère Angélique then appealed to Mère Agnès at Port-Royal, asking if she and the nuns there would have the courage to share their poverty with the thirty women for whom she felt herself responsible. On receiving a characteristic reply to the effect that the good sisters would embrace such a test with joy and gladness, Mère Angélique at once applied to the General of the Order for permission to return to Port-Royal with her protégées. Upon receiving his consent, she then wrote to her mother, Madame Arnauld, begging her to send carriages to transport her charges from Maubuisson to Port-Royal des Champs.

Finding it imperative that she should spend a few days in Paris before returning to Port-Royal, the good Angélique determined to send the others on in advance. But, she thought, if these strangers go to the monastery without me, their talk and chatter will create disturbance and undue excitement. She therefore laid a vow of silence, from which they were to be absolved only by her presence, upon the nuns,

[1] Guilbert, *Mémoires Historiques et Chronologiques*, ii. 155; also *Mémoires et Relations*, p. 36.

and, pinning a card on the sleeve of each telling its owner's name, she let them go.

Thus "thirty mutes" arrived one day at Port-Royal, and it was not until a week later that Mère Angélique, returning with joy after a five years' absence to her long-regretted home, gave them back the gift of speech.[1]

St. Cyran's first real interest in Mère Angélique dates from the episode of the return to Port-Royal des Champs, for he happened to be calling for a second time on Madame Arnauld the day she received the letter from Mère Angélique asking her mother to send carriages to Maubuisson. Hearing Madame Arnauld read the account of these nuns, and Mère Angélique's goodness to them,

"From that time," says Mère Angélique, "God gave him Charity for me." [2]

His first letter to her, dated 4th July 1623, was written to express his delight at her treatment of the Maubuisson nuns.

In this epistle he expressed his famous views on Charity, which he considered should be practised in the same spirit in which the martyrs of the Church had in olden times died for their faith.[3]

But alas! Mère Angélique's "mutes" had hardly grown accustomed to their new home before it was found that the capacities of the old Abbey were being greatly overstrained. Intended as a foundation for only twelve nuns, eighty were lodged there at this time. And, in addition to the discomfort induced by this overcrowding, in the valley of the river Yvette there raged continually a pestilential humidity, in consequence of which many of the nuns fell ill of different kinds of malarial fevers, until finally the whole monastery seemed a huge infirmary.[4] When in two years fifteen nuns actually died, the danger of remaining in such a place became so apparent, that, after appealing to both the head of the Cistercian Order, the Archbishop, and the King, to transfer the institution to Paris, Mère Angélique at last took matters

[1] Their constant prayer during this week of silence was: "Mettez, Seigneur, une sentinelle à ma bouche, et une garde à la porte de mes lèvres" (Guilbert, *Mémoires*, p. 163).

[2] *Mémoires et Relations*, p. 75.

[3] *Lettres Chrestiennes.*

[4] *Mémoires et Relations*, p. 58.

into her own hands, and prepared to flee with the remainder of her flock. In this endeavour she was aided by her mother, who, become a widow on the death of Antoine Arnauld in 1619, had joined the nuns at Port-Royal, and now offered to furnish funds for the purchase of a new Paris home.

Accordingly, in 1625, Madame Arnauld expended 24,000 livres in the purchase in the St. Jacques Quarter of the Hôtel de Clagny, which Mère Angélique had selected for her purpose, and the first year eighteen of the nuns were transferred to Paris. The next year, the remainder of the community followed, leaving only a chaplain at Port-Royal des Champs to attend to the services in the church. In deference to the mother institution, the new home was called Port-Royal de Paris.

The old Hôtel de Clagny lent itself marvellously to the uses of a convent, for by very small manœuvring a large gallery became a dormitory; clever magic of partitioning made of the attics cells for the nuns; while a spacious salon was easily converted into a chapel.[1] The beautiful grounds surrounding the mansion also came into use as promenades for the nuns, those at the back being transformed into kitchen gardens, whose product of fruit and vegetables the convent was soon able to sell.

Like the parent monastery, Port-Royal de Paris formed a square with a large meadow in the centre. The entrance door opened on to the Rue de la Bourbe of those days, now the Boulevard de Port-Royal. On the north and east were large courts. Out of one of these a little exterior staircase led to the *parloirs*, rooms of such size that the whole community could assemble in them at one time. The entrance to the cloister was in the tower at one end of the Rue de la Bourbe, and from it the first story was reached by wooden staircases. The kitchens and refectory led off from the south gallery.

Mère Angélique's reputation attracted the interest of many influential persons toward the new monastery, and gained for it the patronaage of no less a personage than Marie de Médecis, who signified her gracious intention of becoming its founder and benefactor.[2]

It was with the transference of her nuns to Paris that Mère Angélique came under the influence of a new Director—a man

[1] Racine, *Abrégé*, p. 13. [2] *Ibid.*

of very different stamp from the famous apostle of Love and Charity, St. François. This was a son of Sébastien Zamet, the Italian banker and Henri IV's minister of pleasure. Former almoner to Marie de Médecis, and now the Bishop of Langres, M. Zamet was of much importance in the ecclesiastical world of the moment. As his salient characteristics were, however, vanity, caprice, and love of pomp, after the benign and elevating rule of St. François de Sales his artificial methods were a descent in the moral scale, the period of his influence a distinct decadence for Port-Royal.[1] In any case, trouble was not slow in attacking the monastery. In the first place, aside from the cost of the house itself, the removal of the community to Paris having been a very expensive affair, Port-Royal found itself in debt. In the next, it was embarrassed by ecclesiastical quarrels. And thus it was not long before the old peaceful atmosphere of the country was entirely gone.

Sainte-Beuve attributes the degeneration of Port-Royal de Paris to one of its outside devotees, Madame de Pontcarré.[2] When this lady, under a cloud as separated from her husband, was first introduced at Port-Royal, she was humility itself, desirous only of obtaining a modest niche in some corner of the holy place. Little by little, however, her demeanour changed, and, assuming the dignity of a benefactress, out of a large gallery above the *parloirs* allotted to her she constructed a drawing-room, a tower, and an oratory painted in cameo, as well as a roomy cabinet or study. She had also a terrace made in front of her windows, and placed upon it a quantity of orange trees in boxes. These trees the poor nuns were obliged to keep watered, bringing up eighteen to twenty pails of water each day.[3]

Then, not content with revolutionizing her own part of the monastery, she insisted on the rebuilding of the entire place. Herself donating a sum of 24,000 livres—which after all hardly paid for more than the foundation—and laying the corner-stone, she encouraged and even commanded the subsequent ruinous expenditure.

[1] Sainte-Beuve says that the only service rendered Mère Angélique by M. Zamet was that of dissuading her from a plan she had of leaving Port-Royal and entering the Visitation (*Port-Royal*, i. p. 323).

[2] *Ibid.* 325.

[3] Guilbert, *Mémoires Historiques et Chronologiques*, ii. p. 341.

M. Zamet was particularly pleased with this *dévote* of the Orange Trees, who also played the lute very beautifully, and soon he became accustomed to spend many hours listening to her music. On her part, in charming the ears of Port-Royal's susceptible Director, Madame de Pontcarré feigned to be accomplishing a religious duty. It is a question how far her self-sacrifices went in the final day of reckoning toward balancing the weight laid to her door of Port-Royal's degeneration. For although the seeds of evil then planted remained hidden from view during the twenty years which followed the foundation of Port-Royal de Paris, they were ever there, waiting such time as, the strong souls having departed, they could blossom out into dire destruction.

Feeling that ecclesiastical disputes at least would be bettered by severing her Cistercian dependence, Mère Angélique applied to Rome for a change of jurisdiction, and in 1627 the Abbey passed under the rule of the "Ordinary" — that is to say, under that of M. de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris, the uncle and predecessor of Cardinal de Retz, who was later to have so great a hand in the affairs of the Jansenists. It happened that as just at this time Louis XIII and Richelieu were busily engaged besieging the seat of the Huguenots, La Rochelle, the Queen Mother was pleased to pay a visit to her protégé, Port-Royal de Paris. On leaving after a few days, turning to Mère Angélique, Marie de Médecis said graciously:

"Have you nothing to ask of me? When I enter a convent for the first time, I accord whatever is demanded of me." [1]

With singular disregard of this *carte-blanche*, which most people would have improved to beg for rich benefits, the only favour Mère Angélique craved was that the King on his return might make her Abbey elective. This request was granted, and on the first triennial election which followed, both Mère Angélique and her sister resigned their positions of Abbess and Coadjutrice, others being elected in their stead.[2] Mère Agnès was at once sent by M. Zamet to the Abbey of Tard—where shortly afterward she became Abbess—while in the same year (1630), at the request of the Archbishop of Paris, Mère Angélique was appointed Superior of a new and most

[1] Guilbert, *Mémoires*, ii. p. 329. [2] Racine, *Abrégé*, p. 14.

aristocratic institution called St. Sacrement, situated in the Rue Coquillière near the Louvre.

The spirit and meaning of St. Sacrement was adapted to its aristocratic neighbourhood :

> " In the church, perfumes, starched linen, and bouquets . . . with all this, extraordinary austerities : fasting on bread and water, terrible discipline, the most humiliating penitence in the world." [1]

But it was unfortunate in having three rival Bishops as Directors : the Archbishop of Paris, M. de Gondi ; the Archbishop of Sens, M. de Bellegarde ; and M. Zamet, Bishop of Langres. As from the first these gentlemen found it impossible to agree among themselves, disputes, jealousy, and ill-will soon coloured luridly the mixture of worldliness, mysticism, and austerity of discipline at St. Sacrement.

Mère Angélique could not help being much affected by this atmosphere, and the time seemed to have come with her for some radical change of a spiritual nature—for that third and last operation of Divine Grace, which was to bring her under the influence of the perfect Director she had sought so long. Two such awakenings she had already had : the first during the sermon of the Capuchin ; the second, a sermon she had heard on All Saints' Day the same year, when a Bernardine monk had preached on the Eighth Beatitude : " Blessed are those who suffer persecution for the sake of Justice " ; and now the third and last operation of God's favour was seemingly brought about by the innocent means of her younger sister, Mère Agnès, far away in the Abbey of Tard.

[1] *Mémoires et Relations*, p. 70.

CHAPTER VI

THE RULE OF ST. CYRAN BEGUN

"Et vous, qui vous plaisez aux folles passions,
. . . . . .
Fuyez de mes plaisirs la sainte austerité;
Tout respire ici Dieu, la paix, la verité."

Esther

SOME six years before Mère Agnès left Port-Royal de Paris for Tard, she had, in the exaltation of her pious soul, and imbued by Mère Angélique's ideas of devotion, written and circulated among her sister nuns at Port-Royal a booklet of only three or four pages, intended for the use of the monastery alone. A copy of this mystical meditation, called *Le Chapelet Secret*, coming under the notice of M. Zamet, he had greatly approved and was loud in its praise. On hearing that M. Zamet sanctioned the *Chapelet*, however, the Archbishop of Sens, at whose instigation it had originally been written, and who at first had found it attractive and harmless, changed his mind, and secretly having a copy made, sent it to the Sorbonne. Some of the learned doctors there censured it strongly, whereupon it was forwarded still further afield—to Rome itself. Here it was not considered heretical, but on grounds of policy suppressed.[1] Finally the *Chapelet Secret* became so noised abroad that all Paris was aroused over the matter, even the Court taking part in the discussion as to its merits or demerits, some being for, others against, until, behold, a veritable tempest raged.[2]

In this crisis, Mère Angélique turned to St. Cyran, and asked his opinion of the book. Although much occupied at the moment, St. Cyran put everything aside and gave himself up to a careful examination of the disputed pamphlet. A transcendental meditation on the Holy Eucharist, written

[1] Racine, *Abrégé*, pp. 18–19.

[2] Sainte-Beuve, i. p. 330.

under the spell of an enthusiasm of devotion, the purpose of these three or four pages was that of fathoming one by one the virtues of Jesus Christ.[1] To this end, they were divided into sixteen points in honour of the sixteen centuries which had passed since the birth of the Saviour, and separately analysed and glorified His different attributes, such as Saintliness, Truth, Sufficiency, Reign, Possession, Illumination, etc. etc. In a moment of mystical separation, the author, like Tennyson's St. Agnes, had seen the same vision as her sainted prototype: there, distinct and clear before the eyes of her soul, the spiritual wonders of the heavens had unfolded; the gates had rolled back, and, behold, the Heavenly Bridegroom seemed to stand far within, waiting to make her "pure of sin."

Surely there was nothing heretical in these imaginings of a devout nun, far aloof from the world and its prosaic common sense, and the controversy aroused was ludicrous, being nothing more or less than the excuse for an inevitable quarrel. Reading the *Chapelet Secret* again and again, St. Cyran professed himself unable to see anything in it "against Catholic Truth,"[2] and publicly took up its defence.

The first result of this championship of the *Chapelet* was to secure to St. Cyran the warm devotion of M. Zamet, who himself introduced the Abbé—now fifty-two years of age, and living in the cloister of Notre-Dame—into the Convent of Saint-Sacrement, at first as friend, then as Confessor, regulating his own affairs as well after the advice of St. Cyran.[3] All went smoothly thereafter until M. Zamet's presence being required in his diocese of Langres, he left Paris for a short space. During his absence, the new Confessor's offices were called more than ever into requisition, and when the Bishop returned to Paris he was surprised to find what a hold the Abbé had obtained over both the nuns and Mother Superior of Saint-Sacrement. At once his former liking for St. Cyran was turned into fierce jealousy, and although at the first hint of this feeling St. Cyran retired from Saint-Sacrement—leaving M. Singlin, a man who was later to be one of the great powers at Port-Royal, Confessor in his place—such a

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, i. p. 330. [2] *Mémoires et Relations*, p. 77.
[3] Racine, *Abrégé*, p. 20.

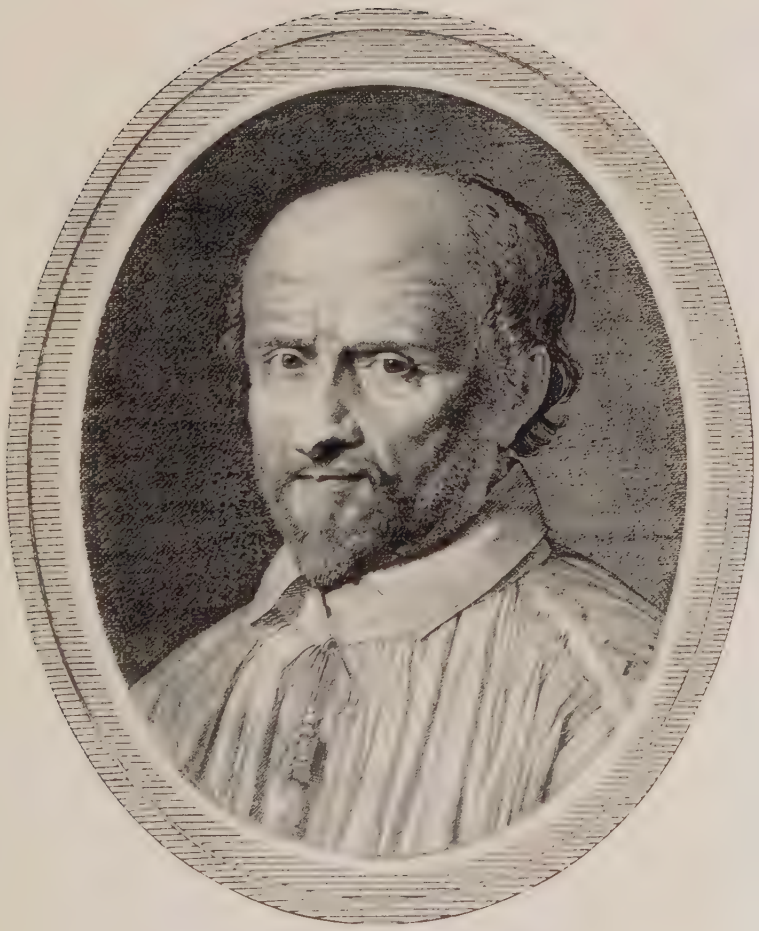
measure only served to show how firmly rooted St. Cyran's influence had become.

For Mère Angélique, a true Arnauld, whose three salient family characteristics of solidity, tenacity, and holiness were opposed in essence to the tender-lenient side of Christianity, there was certain, sooner or later, to be a rebound from love bordering on mysticism, pantheism, and exaltation, to austerity and sacrifice. Moreover, by nature, she was sympathetic with St. Cyran's idea of the Stern Judge as the predominant side of the picture of religion, as also with his ideal of Love akin to that of St. Augustine. Like his model, the sincere priest believed that in the world were

"two forms of love: the love of God, which means self-denial; and the love of self, the denial of God."

Unconsciously, too, the thirteen years of her knowledge of St. Cyran—his personality, strong views, and virile Christianity—had been making their indelible impression upon Mère Angélique. During this time, his renown had been growing in ecclesiastical circles,[1] and tales of his piety, erudition, and force were current everywhere. It was also strongly rumoured that a series of remarkable articles signed "Petrus Aurelius," and dealing with Church practice and discipline, which were creating a great excitement in the religious world, were from his pen. Then, too, he was known to be the particular friend of Père Bérulle, founder of the Oratory, as well as of M. de Condren, having rendered friendly services to each. Through M. de Bérulle he had become acquainted with Vincent de Paul, and was enabled to do the Head of the Missionaries a good office with regard to a religious house he was establishing. Furthermore, the Archbishop of Paris treated the learned Abbé with profound consideration, and in the days when he himself was only Bishop of Luçon, Richelieu had received such an impression of St. Cyran's erudition and piety that he contemplated appointing him almoner to the household of Queen Henrietta, then only

[1] Racine quotes the opinion of M. de Laval, Bishop of La Rochelle, who said of St. Cyran: "This learned man had no other sentiments than those he had drawn from the Holy Bible and the tradition of the Church. He spoke no other language than that of the Word of God; and far from conducting souls by particular and abstract ways, he knew not how to lead them to God by any other road than that of penitence and charity" (*Abrégé*, p. 21).



THE ABBÉ DE ST. CYRAN

FROM AN ENGRAVING AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY PHILIPPE DE CHAMPAGNE

recently married to Charles I of England.[1] One day, as after an audience the great Cardinal was himself reconducting the Abbé through the anterooms, touching his visitor on the shoulder, Richelieu said to the courtiers standing about :

" Messieurs, vous voyez là le plus savant homme de l'Europe." [2]

Thus the matter of the *Chapelet Secret* was only the last trifle which precipitated Mère Angélique into the new path. Once having realized that St. Cyran's was the Rule needed for her and for Port-Royal, her capitulation was complete. In him at last she felt that she had recovered an ideal of the spirit of true religion and piety vainly sought ever since the first miracle had descended upon her soul twenty-seven years before through the medium of the unworthy Capuchin monk.

In her own words, she confessed that once having vanquished her repugnance to confess to St. Cyran :

" I remained so satisfied and content that I seemed to be another creature, and although God made me feel the pain of my sins, I may say that I had never had such real and sensible consolation in all my life, and that I had never had so much pleasure in diverting myself, and in laughing when formerly I would have wept. All our sisters, with the exception of two, were in the same disposition." [3]

Seeing that his efforts to dislodge the new Confessor were useless, and that in spite of all he could do Mère Angélique stood firm in her adherence to St. Cyran, M. Zamet now became so venomous that it soon was necessary to debar him any influence in, and finally even entrance to, the monastery.[4] Upon which, the jealous Bishop created such a disturbance that Mère Angélique determined to give up Saint-Sacrement. Accordingly, she quickly made arrangements, and in 1636 went back to Port-Royal de Paris, whither many of the nuns followed.

But this move did not kill the controversy—it pursued Mère Angélique to Port-Royal de Paris, and there waxed stronger than ever.

The convent was at first much divided in its feeling with regard to the quarrel : some nuns were for, others against,

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, i. p. 307.
[2] Lancelot, *Mémoires*, i. p. 59.
[3] *Mémoires et Relations*, p. 121.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 121.

the idea of changing from M. Zamet to St. Cyran. Even Mère Agnès, just returned from Tard, found it difficult to assign her fealty to one who was represented to her as a usurper. Little by little, however, seeing for herself the power of the man who had championed her *Chapelet*,[1] she was won over.

Of her sister nuns, none held more stubbornly to St. Cyran's predecessor than Marie-Claire. From the first much impressed by M. Zamet, this young and enthusiastic Arnauld had blindly obeyed the Bishop of Langres, even to the point of refusing to speak for several years to her beloved sister Mère Angélique, because, seeing her excess of devotion, M. Zamet had carelessly remarked that it would be better, perhaps, if she never spoke to her again.

Absent for five years at Tard, on returning to Port-Royal during the conflict of Directors, Marie-Claire had thus taken violent partisanship for M. Zamet. For fourteen months, nothing could move her from this standpoint. At last, becoming convinced of St. Cyran's saintliness and her own unworthiness in having resisted his influence, she sent a very penitent letter to the Abbé, putting herself absolutely in his hands :

" Ah," she wrote in deepest humility, " I know that God can save me ; but what obligation has He to do this miracle ? I adore the sentence which He shall pass upon me with *trembling* and with *tranquillity*." [2]

That for six months after this letter St. Cyran refused to see Marie-Claire, seemed incomprehensible, until he himself explained it as based on the principle of offering up a living sacrifice to Repentance :

" That is why," he wrote Marie-Claire, " I have let you wait so long. It was to allow you to live. For five months you have lived the spiritual life." [3]

And then, when one day he felt " obliged," as he confessed, to see his young penitent, he began to rid her of everything

[1] " I have seen M. de St. Cyran," she wrote, " and I believe I may say, without making any confession, that no man ever spoke as this man " (*Mémoires et Relations*, p. 98).

[2] Clémencet, *Port-Royal*, ii. p. 19. [3] *Ibid.* p. 23.

artificial, forbidding her even the consolation of tears, saying that he wished no sorrow which overflowed into the senses.

"Beware of tears!" he exclaimed. "I want no mommeries, no sighs, no gestures, but a silence of the mind, which interdicts all movement." [1]

Sister Anne-Eugénie was also devoted to M. Zamet, but St. François de Sales had been her greatest helper, having comforted and strengthened her in her spiritual life, where at every turn she had to combat dominant faults of pride and haughtiness. When at last she too surrendered to M. de St. Cyran, the latter, knowing that she most loved prayer and solitude, began his discipline by appointing her to a task repugnant to her—the instruction of children. For fifteen or sixteen years she continued to fill this distasteful duty, "at the point of the sword," as she described it.[2]

Thus we see that in directing Mère Angélique, her sisters, and the other nuns of Port-Royal, St. Cyran's method was a most severe and unbending one. He won them over to a life of penitence, silence, and perpetual abnegation of self in a holier, diviner existence to come, not by honeyed words or enticing promises of future reward, but by tearing aside the veil from their weaknesses, and the betrayal of each as she really was. It is extraordinary how he managed to impress them with his and Jansenius's sentiment of devotion to the Truth. For from the first these simple souls seemed to thrive on Truth, shorn of exaggeration or tenderness. Seeking neither to analyse or probe it, from the beginning they accepted the conception given them by their spiritual guide, and were willing to lay down their lives for it, classing it under no ism or sect.

And now, just as through the medium of a friendship and the imagination of a nun, apparently by the accident of Chance, the principles of Jansenius and St. Cyran, their realistic understanding of religion had at last definitely found their way into Port-Royal de Paris, it was ordained that St. Cyran's influence should dominate a new and more complex element still in the monastic life: that represented by the Recluses or Solitaires.

Sainte-Beuve to the contrary, this third panel of our

[1] Clémencet, *Port-Royal*, ii. p. 25. [2] *Mémoires et Relations*, p. 38.

picture was not merely the outcome of a theological dogma, but, like Luther's Protestantism, the result of a real revolt and a very real enthusiasm. It is from this standpoint that it is chiefly interesting to-day.

A description of the Society of Port-Royal takes us back again to the valley of the river Yvette, where we must study the chief Enthusiasts themselves: the worldly *dévots* et *dévotes*, or honorary members of the association, as well as the issue of the teachings and writings of these Solitaires on the world at large.

PART II

PORT-ROYAL IN ITS GREATNESS

1636–1653

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST SOLITAIRES AND THEIR ENTHUSIASMS

"On ne s'élève point aux grandes vérités sans enthousiasme."
VAUVENARGUES

NOT long after the Arnauld family, with Mère Angélique at its head, had submitted itself to the spiritual guidance of St. Cyran, the wife of M. d'Andilly fell ill of a serious malady. This lady, daughter of the distinguished ambassador and statesman, M. de La Boderie, was much more worldly minded than the Arnaulds, having been brought up at the court of Marie de Médecis in the days when the royal favourite, the Italian Concini, Maréchal d'Ancre, had imported the spirit of luxury and elegance into the circle surrounding the young Louis XIII—a taste which was not killed with the murder of Concini or the disgrace of the Queen Mother. Only fourteen at the time of her marriage to M. d'Andilly, her husband, ten years older, then patronizingly described his bride as endowed with as many graces as could be expected in one so young.

In 1636, Madame d'Andilly was scarcely thirty-seven, and still young and gay, in spite of the fact that she had borne fifteen children, ten of whom lived to mature age. But, when stricken down with a fatal malady in the midst of her pleasure and duties, she suddenly felt the need of religion, and the Abbé de St. Cyran was hastily called to her bedside to prepare her for that last long journey.

For some days, the eldest of the five sons of M. d'Andilly's sister, Catherine Le Maitre, also sat by this death-bed, and the words of St. Cyran as he apostrophized the passing soul came as a revelation to the spirit of the

young man, hitherto absorbed in the race for worldly distinction.

"Partez, âme chrétienne, partez de ce monde, au nom de Dieu, qui vous a crée!" [1]

came the solemn voice of the priest. Following that soul in mental vision, fleeing from the world to appear before the Judgment Seat, in a flash, a realization of his own shortcomings, the futility of human ambition, overcame this descendant of the Arnaulds. Tears welled into his eyes, fear and anguish swelled his heart, until, unable to control his emotion, he rushed from the room of Death, out into the garden and the stillness of the August night.

Here for hours he fought the fight of the soul over the flesh, and, ere the morning dawned, possessed by an enthusiasm of renunciation and penitence, he resolved to give up his dreams of worldly happiness and honour, and from that moment to put his newly-awakened being under the spiritual guidance of the man whom he had just heard admonishing his aunt's departing spirit.[2]

Called to the Bar at twenty, and beginning a year later to plead in the courts, Antoine Le Maitre, worthy successor to Simon Marion and Antoine Arnauld, had soon earned the reputation of being the greatest advocate of France, surpassing the souvenirs left by both his ancestors. In fact, fearful of talking to empty benches, on the days when M. Le Maitre was to conduct a suit in the court, the other advocates of Paris arranged never to occupy their places, but to go instead to listen to the famous orator in the *Grand' Chambre*, which was too small to hold all those desirous of listening to him.[3] Thus the excitement in legal and other circles over the news of his disappearance was intense. Some thought he was mad; others that he was over-influenced; all blamed the action he took in thus not only separating himself from worldly things, but in embracing at the same time poverty, obscurity, isolation, silence—a death in life. Some were malicious enough to say he left the Bar hoping to succeed to greater honours in the

[1] "Depart, Christian Soul, leave this world, in the name of God All-Powerful, who has created thee" (*Recueil de Plusieurs Pièces*, p. 144).

[2] Lancelot, *Mémoires*, i. p. 309.

[3] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, i. p. 372.

ANTOINE LE MAÎTRE, PORT ROYAL'S FIRST SOLITAIRE

FROM AN ENGRAVING AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY PHILIPPE DE CHAMPAGNE

Church ;[1] Balzac, a more discriminating friend, wrote to Chapelain as follows :

" Secondary causes—such as you would call a failure in love, rebuff from superiors, or other misfortune of that nature—have no part in this change of heart." [2]

While Chapelain in reply vowed that Le Maitre's act, instead of filling him with indignation, as it did many, aroused his admiration.

Much excited, the Hôtel Rambouillet was divided in its opinion. Mademoiselle de Scudéry, whom Ninon de l'Enclos had called " the Jansenist of Love," was loud in her appreciation, exclaiming :

" To be capable of these great attachments, requires Virtue " ;[3]

others found it quixotic and senseless.

Whatever actuated M. Le Maitre, it is certain that he acquired his distaste of the world and his pleasures not through satiety, nor fear of future punishment, but a divine premonition of the passing away of earthly things, and the eternal endurance of the heavenly.[4] In this respect, he marked a new departure, not only in the religious life of his time, but in that of the Arnauld family. His grandfather and great-grandfather —even his uncle M. d'Andilly—had been pious, but in their piety was a distinct spice of worldliness, for, while anxious to secure their future fate, they were by no means indifferent to providing for their advancement here below.

In his letter to M. Séguier, Lord High Chancellor of Paris, Le Maitre himself explained his motive :

" I demand of God," he said, " no other grace than that of living and dying in His service. I desire no commerce either by spoken or written word with the world, which has

[1] Tallemant des Réaux thus describes Antoine Le Maitre : " In the world, he was a gentleman of a somewhat easy morality ; it was thought that when he went into retreat, it was out of vexation at not having been made Advocate-General. . . . Others thought that he designed to become a preacher, but that Devotion caught him on the road " (*Historiettes*, vol. iv. 74). Sainte-Beuve, however, says Le Maitre refused the office of Advocate-General (*Port-Royal*, i. 371).

[2] Oscar de Vallée, *De l'Eloquence Judiciare au Dix-septième Siècle*, p. 419.

[3] " Il faut de la vertu pour être capable de ces grands attachements " (*ibid.* p. 427).

[4] The same historian says: " Lemaistre renounced, with other pleasures, that which comes from the approbation of the world, because he had separated the Immortal from the Perishable."

thought to ruin me. I wish to pass my life in as complete a solitude as if I were in a monastery."

When told of Le Maitre's resolution, St. Cyran had fully understood the responsibility entailed upon himself, and although joyful over the conversion, did not fail to exhort the young man to do nothing hastily. On the expiration of a year, as Le Maitre continued in the same mind, St. Cyran realizing that his convert was sincere, occupied himself with the question of what to do with him. Convinced that a life apart was best, but undecided where to place him, he received the young man temporarily in his own lodgings in the Luxembourg quarter, opposite the Chartreux, whither he had removed a short time before in order to be nearer Port-Royal de Paris.

It was not St. Cyran finally, but Madame Le Maitre, who solved the difficulty as to a place of asylum. When the nuns removed to Paris, she herself had entered Port-Royal as a simple postulante, and although she did not take the veil until some years later, at the death of her husband, her talent for affairs, her practical genius, had long been invaluable to her sister, Mère Angélique. And now, on the receipt of the good news that her eldest son was to embrace the life of a religious hermit, she remembered an old privilege granted the Abbey of Port-Royal in 1223 by Pope Honoré III. At that time, this Pope issued a Bull by which—among other rights—the then newly founded Cistercian Abbey might serve as a retreat to those persons of secular profession, who, unwilling to take upon themselves monastical vows, were yet desirous of retiring from the world, and leading lives of penitence and seclusion.[1]

For four hundred years, this privilege remained a seemingly unappreciated, forgotten thing of documental record. Now, remembering it, Madame Le Maitre was so filled with enthusiasm that she determined to build for her son a little house in the grounds of her beloved Port-Royal de Paris. As M. de St. Cyran approved the plan, work was straightway begun on the building. But what was the pious mother's further delight, when her second and favourite son, Simon Le Maitre de Séricourt, three years younger than Antoine, suddenly decided to follow his brother's example.

[1] Racine, *Abrégé de l'Histoire de Port-Royal* (Gazier), p. 2.

By profession a soldier, at twenty-four years of age De Séricourt, as he was called, had attained the rank of Major, and shortly before Antoine's conversion was serving in the fortress of Phillipsbourg on the Rhine, where one of his cousins was commander. On a winter's night, the citadel was surprised by troops of the Emperor, and by means of ice-covered moats made to surrender. De Séricourt and Arnauld were taken prisoners to Esslingen, from whence, by the address and strategy of the latter, they both escaped to Venice, thence to France.[1]

This experience seems to have been the first thing to attract M. de Séricourt's serious attention to the fact that a Divine Providence was watching over him. Then he was told of his brother De Saci's progress in piety under St. Cyran, and, recalled to Paris by Madame d'Andilly's death, went in a strange mood to see Antoine in St. Cyran's apartment. At first he failed to recognize in the pale preoccupied student before him the brilliant advocate and man of the world he had parted with some years previously.

Noticing his brother's astonishment, and embracing him warmly, Le Maitre asked gaily if he did not know him. "The former Le Maitre," he said, "is dead to the world; this one seeks nothing more than to die here to himself. . . ."

"Do you too," he continued, "like many people of the world, do me the honour to think me mad?"

"Not I," replied De Séricourt earnestly; "you and I were educated in too Christian a manner not to be aware that there are wise as well as mad follies. Yours I should call a wise folly. Indeed, from the moment I heard the news, I have wished many times to be able to imitate you. I came here half conquered, but what I see has made it complete."[2]

Then, even as his brother had sacrificed his wig and gown, De Séricourt offered up his sword to St. Cyran, writing:

"Sir,—If I might have the happiness to see you, I would throw myself at your knees, and put my sword at your feet, even as my brother has put his pen."[3]

Awaiting the completion of the new home planned by their mother, the brothers Le Maitre lived at Port-Royal de Paris in a temporary apartment allotted to them by the nuns. Yet while

[1] *Mémoires de l'Abbé Arnauld* (Petitot), xxxiv. p. 132.
[2] Fontaine, *Mémoires*, i. p. 80, etc.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 82.

so near the human companionship which the nuns signified, they were really severed from it by more than stone walls : by that stern determination of the religious recluse to steadfastly crucify every natural impulse. For, calling themselves First and Second Hermit, they at once began to literally carry out St. Cyran's idea of separation from all human ties in order the more closely to approach the Divine Presence. Their *solitude à deux* was one of absolute silence : not a word passed their lips, even to each other. Here they learned that first lesson of the recluse, of which Montaigne wrote so understandingly :

" La plus grande chose du monde est de savoir être à soi."

Soon, however, other penitents were added to their number. The place in the community of the Third Recluse, Claude Lancelot, was already written in the Book of the Future as that of Humanist, Hellenist, and Mathematician. He too owed the depth and sincerity of his enthusiasm to St. Cyran, and his spiritual progress forms a charming background to that of his two older friends. Unlike them, he was not a sudden convert from the world, having since his twelfth year been educated in the community of St. Nicolas du Chardonnet. It was by means of his own studies that he had come to admire the Old Fathers of the Church, for, from the time of entering the monastery, the boy had never heard the New Testament read aloud.[1] Through these studies, longings for a renaissance of the ancient spirit of religion, as evidenced in St. Augustine and St. Thomas, filled his heart.

When Lancelot was about twenty-one years of age, St. Cyran, who was a friend of M. Bourdoise, Head of the Seminary, began coming to St. Nicolas, and occasionally saying Mass there. For a long time, the modest youth, unaccustomed to the world, did not dare approach the Abbé, around whom in his own mind he had built up an ideal of a seventeenth-century St. Augustine.

Finally, desire to talk with him grew so strong that, summoning up courage, two days after the death of Madame d'Andilly he boldly knocked at the Abbé's door.

[1] " And as for the New Testament, I had been at St. Nicolas up to the age of twenty without having been made to read a single line, at least in private " (Lancelot, *Mémoires*, p. 29).

St. Cyran was still under the spell of that exhausting experience, but he received Lancelot kindly and sympathetically. Lancelot had never heard of Port-Royal, nor had he ever seen Antoine Le Maitre, although the name of the brilliant advocate was known to him. Yet his own great desire was to put himself under the guidance of St. Cyran and to lead a life apart, and on being told of Le Maitre's conversion and plan of retirement, this desire became persistent. With his usual caution, it was not until time had proved the young penitent's sincerity that St. Cyran consented to associate him with Le Maitre and De Séricourt, and then as a last warning he said :

" Although I am credited with having some knowledge, I may yet never impart it to you. St. Hilary was one of the cleverest men of his time, but he did not make a scholar of St. Martin." [1]

Antoine Singlin, the Fourth Hermit, was destined to play a great part at Port-Royal. Born at Paris in 1607, he was the son of a wine merchant, and early apprenticed to a dealer in cloth. In the latter business he remained until the age of twenty-two, when, religious feeling fermenting for years in his soul, became so strong that one day of his own accord he sought out Vincent de Paul, Superior of the Pères de la Mission, to ask his advice for the future.

" Become a priest," was the reply of his oracle ; so, after studying the proper length of time, Singlin entered the Order of Missionaries, and, taking priestly vows, was placed by Vincent de Paul as Catechist and Confessor in the Hôpital de la Pitié. Here he met St. Cyran, who, recognizing his qualities, introduced him to the nuns of Saint-Sacrement in the position of Confessor. By the usual evolution, it was not long before Singlin, becoming dissatisfied with the administration of the Hôpital de la Pitié, wished to put himself entirely in St. Cyran's hands. The latter did not refuse him, but, to try the mettle of his new disciple, sent him, the summer of 1637, with several children under his charge down to the deserted Port-Royal des Champs. Here, in the solitude, Singlin had an opportunity of retiring within himself, and renewing his whole being under the stimulus of the teaching of St. Cyran. Although he had already served some years as a priest, during his retreat at

[1] Lancelot, *Mémoires*, i. p. 34.

Port-Royal des Champs, he abstained from saying Mass until he felt himself more worthy. Returning to Paris at the commencement of the winter, he joined the recluses at Port-Royal de Paris, determined to devote himself to poverty and penitence. This he did to such purpose that

"He had," Lancelot relates in his *Mémoires*,[1] "only a poor dressing-gown of violet serge, and wore the shabbiest clothes, no one being able to induce him to buy new ones. Giving his own room to one of his pupils, little Bignon, he himself lodged in a miserable cabinet in the corner of the staircase, very cold, very dark, and exposed to all the noise of the Faubourg. There he studied all night long, sleeping on a board completely dressed, one or two hours only."

And yet it was in this man that St. Cyran saw the ideal priest, that "Third Officer of God after Jesus Christ in the Church," him who had power to remit sins and offer the sacrifice.

Among the very first to join Le Maitre and Séricourt at Port-Royal de Paris in the beginning was a certain M. de Bascle, a gentleman from Quercy in Béarn. The history of this man is a sad one of treachery and deceit, where he had a right to expect loyalty and truth. Discovering on the very day of his marriage that his wife had grossly deceived him, he so brooded over his sorrow as to completely ruin his health. Fortunately, wreckage of the physical brought life and strength to a soul which had been careless and unregenerate. The strong personality of St. Cyran originally took hold of this heartsick man during his illness, through the potency of a vision, in which he saw St. John the Baptist standing in a desert, pointing out to him a valley at the foot of a mountain as the refuge of penitence.[2] On leaving Quercy about two years before Le Maitre's retreat, and coming to Paris to try to get a position as tutor, De Bascle, meeting St. Cyran by chance, was startled to see in the famous Abbé the St. John of his dreams. Afterward, going down to Port-Royal des Champs—behold the very valley and mountain toward which St. John was pointing!

This remarkable incident decided the already penitent sinner to at once put himself under the care of St. Cyran, and

[1] i. p. 35.

[2] A. Le Maitre, "Histoire de M. de Bascle," *Receuil de Plusieurs Pièces pour servir à l'Histoire de Port-Royal*, p. 183.

to retire to Port-Royal. Like Lancelot, his especial duty at Port-Royal was in connection with children, whom from the first the Solitaires had begun to teach. That he was appreciated in this field of work, is proved by a letter from M. de Bernières to M. d'Andilly a few years afterward, in which he spoke of De Bascle as

"the joy of my heart, the love of my children, and the repose of my poor and desolate house of Chesnai." [1]

Le Maitre's four brothers were all members of the community. Of these only one resembled the first two in the depth and sincerity of his devotion. This was Isaac Louis Le Maitre, known as De Saci through an anagram framed from his Christian name. He was peculiarly St. Cyran's religious creation; and, placed by his mother early under the care of the family saint, he steadily progressed in piety, until it was recognized that in him, like Singlin, was the spirit of the true priest. Not only St. Cyran, but Singlin realized this, and very early the latter chose De Saci for his successor, saying:

"He must grow and I must efface myself." [2]

De Saci once wrote to Le Maitre [3] his opinion concerning their younger brothers, Jean Le Maitre de St. Elme and Charles Le Maitre de Valmont, both of whom were under his charge during the early days at Port-Royal. He found them peculiar natures and difficult to understand. De Valmont, he said, was the more annoying because, although more polite in his manners, he always had his own way; De St. Elme, on the contrary, yielded to caprice, but afterwards again became amenable. Both finally left the monastery and went back to secular life, leading existences which, if not exactly godless, were not pious. De Valmont died at Port-Royal in 1652; De St. Elme married, and sent his three daughters to Port-Royal to be educated, living himself until the year 1690.

The daily routine began for the Solitaires at an hour after midnight, when all assembled in Singlin's room to say Matins. It was the duty of the military De Séricourt to waken his fellow-hermits, and this he did with the greatest

[1] Lettre à M. d'Andilly, 12 Mai 1662.
[2] Fontaine, *Mémoires*, i. p. 341.
[3] *Ibid.* i. p. 121.

regularity. After Matins and Laudes, they kissed the ground, as did the nuns, imitating in this Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and others, continuing prostrate long enough to say a Miserere.[1] The remainder of the day was then spent in meditation, prayer, and reading of the Bible and the Fathers of the Church.

But, to leave the Solitaires for a moment, the ecclesiastical world of Paris was much excited by the publication of those anonymous writings signed "Petrus Aurelius"—writings which combated the policy of Richelieu and the Church by powerfully establishing the doctrine that the Church was not a monarchy but a hierarchy of Bishops. The Jesuits called them rank Calvinism, but to Richelieu, who was especially heated just then on the subject, they were unbearable. The great minister was intent upon persuading Louis XIII, who had not enough emotion to feel real remorse for sin, that absolution did not depend upon actual penitence, but could be granted by the priest if the penitent were contrite for whatever cause, even though torn only by fear of future punishment. "Petrus Aurelius" had no compunction in asserting, on the contrary, that pardon for sin was only possible in cases of real contrition of heart.

The placing of the authorship of the utterances of Petrus Aurelius upon the man whom he had called "the First Scholar in Europe," was by this time not disagreeable to Richelieu, whose ear had first of all been poisoned by his henchman, Père Joseph, whom St. Cyran had supplanted in the confidence of the nuns of Calvaire. Then for two years M. Zamet, in revenge for St. Cyran's supposed bad offices to himself with the Port-Royal nuns, had been carrying on a series of machinations against the Abbé, accusing him of diverting souls from their communion, etc. Moreover, St. Cyran had refused all the five abbeys offered him, and little by little had been constituting himself a stumbling-block in some of Richelieu's dearest plans. As politician, Cardinal Richelieu desired nothing more ardently than the annulment of Gaston d'Orléans' marriage with Marguérite de Lorraine.

"No," St. Cyran declared quite openly to Richelieu, "the wedding of Monsieur is indissoluble, and I cannot comprehend your reasons for saying it is not."

In addition to this and similar contraventions, Richelieu had,

[1] *Nécrologe de Notre-Dame de Port-Royal des Champs*, Preface.

as St. Cyran himself confessed, "seventeen other grievances," probably one of the most powerful being the fact that St. Cyran knew some very secret details about his private life. Irretrievably incensed at last by so much opposition, Richelieu decided to incarcerate this rebel where he could do no more mischief. So, at two o'clock in the morning on the 14th May 1638, the garden of St. Cyran's house near the Luxembourg was invaded by a company of rude soldiers. At six, entering the Abbé's chamber and finding him quietly reading with his nephew, M. de Barcos, they notified him of the King's order that he should follow them.

"Very well," said St. Cyran, betraying neither surprise nor alarm, "let us go where the King commands";

and, asking permission to change his dressing-gown for his priest's *soutane*, he declared himself ready to accompany the royal messengers.

In passing through the park of Vincennes, it chanced that the carriage containing St. Cyran encountered that of M. d'Andilly, who was on his way to his estate of Pomponne.

Gaily the latter, not observing that his friend's escort were soldiers, called out—

"Where are you taking all these good people?"

"Oh, they are taking me," replied the Abbé, and, stopping to explain the situation to M. d'Andilly, he asked if the latter had not some book to lend him, as in his preoccupation on leaving home he had forgotten to put one in his pocket. Fortunately, M. d'Andilly had a copy of *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, and he gladly gave it to the prisoner. Then, embracing one another sadly and tenderly, the two friends parted, M. d'Andilly turning full of sorrow and misgiving toward Pomponne, St. Cyran, with his precious copy of *St. Augustine* in his hand, being driven toward the prison.[1]

This arrest was a blow not only to the nuns of Port-Royal and all Jansenist sympathizers, but especially the Solitaires, for from the beginning of their retreat St. Cyran had been accustomed to visit them at least every other day, and his spirit was dominant everywhere. During the short period of his actual presence among them, after overlooking the lessons

[1] Besoigne, *Histoire de l'Abbaie de Port-Royal*, ii. pp. 385–386.

and occupations of the children, he would go to the room of each recluse in turn for personal advice and encouragement. At his suggestion, the little community grew into the habit of reading in common St. Augustine's treatise on the True Religion, and at other times St. Cyran ravished them all, especially Singlin and Le Maitre,—both of whom required the spur of theological and intellectual food,—by himself reading aloud and explaining the Evangelists.

Almost simultaneously with this arrest, a new trouble came to the Solitaires, for suddenly the Archbishop of Paris bethought him that it was not proper for men to live in such close proximity to the nuns. Forced to withdraw from the Paris monastery, with the permission of the Prelate, the recluses determined to take refuge in the abandoned Abbey of Les Champs. Arriving there in the early days of June 1638, they found the place in a lamentable state of ruin and desolation. During the twelve years which had elapsed since the nuns left, the buildings had become dilapidated, the grounds much overgrown with underbrush, and full of vipers, the marshy pool stagnant and fetid. Yet all still had the "sad and fearful beauty" remarked by Anne-Eugénie Arnauld on her first arrival there twenty years before.[1]

For a time the recluses remained in the deserted historic spot, trying to lead the life they had been accustomed to, studying, praying, and each evening, in search of better air than the poisoned atmosphere of the swamp afforded, mounting the hill at the back. Here in the farm called Les Granges, added to the monastery by Jehanne the Second, they could rest in the purer ether, and say their evensong of praise and thanksgiving, "letting their voices witness," as Lancelot said,

"to the joy of their souls, and to the fact that God might still be praised publicly, even when men thought to hold Truth captive."[2]

But alas! only three months after St. Cyran's imprisonment, the peace at Port-Royal des Champs was rudely broken in upon by the visit of an infamous Commissioner sent by Richelieu to discover further points of evidence against St. Cyran.

[1] *Mémoires et Relations*, p. 35. [2] *Mémoires*, i. p. 109.

Arriving at an early hour of the morning with the intention of surprising the Solitaires, this Commissioner, M. Laubardemont, knocking at Le Maitre's door, found him completely dressed in mourning garb at his *prie-dieu*, praying for the release of St. Cyran. Asking the distinguished Penitent whether it was true that he was in the habit of having visions,

"Yes," replied Le Maitre, "I do have visions. When I open this window (opening one) I see the village of Vaumurier; when I open this, I see that of St. Lambert. These are all my visions."

Furious at being thus answered, Laubardemont then attacked each of the Solitaires, interrogating even the innocent pupils of only eight or ten years of age.[1] But he could discover nothing, nor could he prove any undue influence of the prisoner at Vincennes. Before leaving, however, he informed the Solitaires that they must abandon their retreat within five days. Thus, although when Laubardemont's interrogatory was reported at Paris the laugh was at the expense of Richelieu and his emissaries, the pain was that of the pious recluses, for exile and change lay before them.

Where were they now to find refuge? Fate decided. It took Antoine Le Maitre, who had thought never again to return to Paris, back to the Faubourg St. Jacques, where in a little inn called the Barbe d'Or, not far from Port-Royal de Paris, he deliberated on the next move to make.[2] This was decided for him through Lancelot, to whom an asylum was offered by one of his pupils in the town of La Ferté Milon, fifty miles from Paris. Here both he, Séricourt, and Singlin found a home, and here they remained for thirteen months as the guests of a certain Madame Vitart, a woman of vital interest in our history as the great-aunt of Jean Racine, the literary glory of Port-Royal's close.

In the few short months of his life at the Champs, Le Maitre had grown so fond of the scene of his spiritual struggles, his victories over the physical nature around him, that in exile he characteristically turned to poetry to express his

[1] Lancelot, *Mémoires*, i. p. 111.

[2] "M. Le Maitre," says Lancelot (*Mémoires*, i. p. 118), "had the greatest difficulty of them all in finding a retreat. His merit rendering him the most considerable, each one feared to irritate the Powers in taking him away."

nostalgia. Time and time again during his stay at La Ferté Milon he used to recite—never without tears in his eyes—the following verse, which he himself composed :

"Lieux charmants, prisons volontaires,
On me bannit en vain de vos sacrés déserts ;
Le suprême Dieu que je sers
Fait partout de vrais solitaires." [1]

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[1] Rough translation :

Lovely vistas, prisons free as air,
In vain am I from thy deserts banned,
The God supreme who doth my will command,
Makes true recluses everywhere.

(Fontaine, i. p. 87.)

CHAPTER II

RETURN OF THE SOLITAIRES TO PORT-ROYAL DES CHAMPS, AND EARLY DAYS THERE

"I am the Vine, ye are the branches. . . . Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"

DURING the summer of 1639, the inhabitants of the town of La Ferté Milon became used, on fine evenings, as they sat before their cottage doors, to seeing the four *Messieurs*, very simply attired, march past in single file, devoutly saying their beads. Out of respect, and impressed by the unaffected piety of these holy men, the villagers had the habit of rising and keeping profound silence as they passed. And each day the four recluses, in remembrance of their daily walk up to Les Granges, religiously climbed at nightfall the hill behind La Ferté, and in all other respects endeavoured in their exile to faithfully reproduce the details of their former existence in the desert.[1]

After thirteen months of banishment, things being a little quieter in Paris, it was thought safe for Le Maitre and Séricourt to return incognito to Port-Royal des Champs. On learning of the proposed departure of the two hermits, the Misses Racine, with whom the recluses had necessarily come in contact in the house of Madame Vitart their aunt, suddenly appeared before Le Maitre in a strange pitch of excitement. Evidently of most impulsive disposition, and hardly knowing what they said, the two sisters began reproaching him, asking why he had ever come at all if he had meant so soon to forsake them. Startled by such an unexpected accusation, the Solitaire answered very gently that he would never forget the goodness they had shown

[1] Lancelot, *Mémoires*, i. p. 124.

him, and that he never forsook anything he had once shown an interest in. Whereupon, to his surprise and consternation, without any warning, the indiscreet sisters, throwing themselves at his feet, begged him either to remain in La Ferté or to take them with him wherever he went!

Determined now to put an end to this unseemly situation, Le Maitre again plainly but decidedly told them that he must go. Whereupon the young women boldly replied:

"Do as you please, but we declare to you that we will never leave you!"

Here was indeed a psychological problem for the earnest Penitent to solve! Womenkind in general were, he knew, snares of the Devil, so as best he might he reiterated his assertion that he was obliged to go, and that it was impossible for them to follow him.

Resolved not to be outdone, the two enthusiasts then applied to Mère Angélique, who, less severe than her nephew, actually accorded them a dwelling situated within the precincts of Port-Royal des Champs, but separated by several large courtyards from the place where the Solitaires were to dwell.[1]

When St. Cyran heard that the Solitaires had gone to live in a town—that place where "the Devil walks in the streets"[2]—the wise Director of Souls had been much disturbed. Now, learning what had happened, he at once wrote to Le Maitre as follows:

"Whereas," he argued, "if an ordinary man wishes to be virtuous and chaste, he must rarely allow himself conversation with the other sex; once having become a penitent and recluse, he must never even speak to a woman."

On reading these words of his spiritual master and Director, the First Solitaire characteristically decided on the spot not only never again to leave his cell, but to have converse with no one whomsoever. And he kept this latter resolution until again St. Cyran had to interfere and remind him that true

[1] Fontaine, *Mémoires*, i. p. 100.

[2] "For," he said, "I myself know the Devil a little. . . . One must be old in the trade to know its ruses. . . . The slightest clouds are to be feared" (*Ibid.* i. p. 102).

penitence lay, not in the extremes, but in the middle road of Time and Place.[1]

In their exile at La Ferté the influence of the Solitaires was productive of some notable conversions, but was especially perceptible in the Racine family itself. Marie des Moulins, Jean Racine's grandmother, retired some years afterward to Port-Royal, where her sister was already cloistered, in the humble position, it was said, of cellarer. The daughter of Madame Racine also became a nun at about the same time. Madame Vitart did not actually enter Port-Royal, but remained all her life the true and constant friend of *les Messieurs*, hiding them in her house, and doing them whatever service she could. Her husband went so far as to forsake wife and children to follow Le Maitre and Séricourt back to Port-Royal des Champs, where he straightway undertook the administrative part of the monastery (*économe*), leaving his more scholarly associates free to devote themselves exclusively to study and prayer.

On the death of this good man some two years after their return, there was no one to manage household affairs or work on the farm. Moreover, owing to neglect and hard times, the property now yielded almost nothing, yet the convent in Paris depended upon revenue from the country estate for the major part of its income. Thus, forced to think of practical matters, the recluses began to put their enthusiasm to the test by endeavouring to reclaim the ground of the Abbey and the outlying farms, exalted in this effort by the thought that in so dong they would be benefiting the nuns.

The task was no light one; it meant toil of hands and sweat of brow, the very prayers of the labourers having to be said wherever they happened to be—whether in the middle of a field sowing grain, in the swamps draining off the putrid water, or in the meadows mowing the grass or preparing the rows for the seed.

For Le Maitre, work in the fields had primarily been very difficult. He confessed to Lancelot that he had only been constrained by a dream to render this service to the nuns. One night he saw in his sleep the Lord closely pursuing him and menacing him with death and ruin did he not help Christ's spouses; and awakening, as if beside himself, he was so frightened

[1] Fontaine, *Mémoires*, i. p. 101.

that there and then he jumped out of bed on to his knees, promising God to obey all His commands.[1] Thus, leaving his books and meditation, the great advocate became a worker in the fields. But while making hay in the heat of midday, and compelling from the stubborn earth its beauty and its increase, Antoine Le Maitre was fighting the rebellious impulses and desires of his own impetuous spirit, his body being constantly under the chastisement of a *cilice*, or hair shirt. And, when the physical work was done, he further disciplined his mind by the study of Hebrew, this being undertaken at the suggestion of St. Cyran, who was anxious to have some favourite Psalms and other religious treatises translated.[2] His natural gifts were thus turned to the service of God, and to the dissemination of knowledge. As may be imagined, both by Port-Royal primogeniture and his talents, Le Maitre was the King of Solitaires; all were proud to have this great man at their head, and whenever he opened his lips, his words were listened to with avidity. His voice was rich, full-toned, his wit caustic, "his mouth full of words of gold."

Like that of his grandfather, the *maîtresse voile* of Le Maitre's eloquence is said to have been classical and Biblical allusions. On one occasion, defending the cause of a servant-girl betrayed by the son of a blacksmith, he called upon Mars and Neptune to interfere in her behalf.

Voltaire, the cynical, said of Le Maitre apropos of the wisdom of publishing the speeches of orators:

"He was an advocate and considered very eloquent, till he so far yielded to vanity as to publish his speeches, when men thought so no longer."[3]

But at Port-Royal, instead of electrifying by his reasoning, the beauty of his language and demeanour, a court-room full of men of the law, his eloquence was turned either toward astonishing a country judge, who had arraigned the nuns of Port-Royal, a new Director to whom he bade welcome in

[1] Lancelot, *Mémoires*, i. p. 126.

[2] M. de St. Cyran wrote Le Maitre from prison: "It will give me pleasure if you will send me some Psalms as you translate them. I like to sing the Psalms in my prison in the language of the Church, and I shall be glad to sing them in our tongue" (Fontaine, i. p. 105).

[3] Oscar de Vallée, *L'Eloquence judiciare au dix-septième Siècle*, p. 437.

the name of all, or only a parcel of schoolboys, among whom one day there was to stand the future great poet, Jean Racine.[1]

It is easy to picture the surprise and delight of the country judge when this to him unknown recluse pleaded, in a manner not heard before in the unlettered provinces, the cause of the nuns against an ignorant butcher. Finally, unable longer to contain his admiration, the judge, believing Le Maitre to be a merchant by the name of Drancé, said to him:

"Believe me, leave your business, follow the law, and I do not hesitate to guarantee that you will acquire quite as much renown as the celebrated Le Maitre." [2]

Antoine Le Maitre's unique compensation for the life of excitement and romance he had renounced, was to interrogate each new convert as he was added to the community on his personal spiritual experiences, every such recital giving him as much pleasure as though it were a novel.

For De Séricourt, the work out of doors was easier. His disposition was softer and more yielding. Strangely enough, the quality that remains to us from this first military enthusiast of Port-Royal is the sweetness and delicacy of his spirit. On becoming a convert, duty became his fetish; to it, he sacrificed every impulse of a naturally warm heart, his life being spent in the practice of the most exhausting austerities. Antoine he loved with the tender affection of a child, but even this emotion he felt was alienating him from his heavenly vision, so, in the hope that nothing might stand between him and the Divine Love, he removed his cell farther and farther away from the earthly tie this proximity represented.

Not having his brother's literary power, De Séricourt lacked in this speechless solitude the consolation of putting his thoughts on paper. But he was not long in finding his particular *métier*—one which was to become of great value at Port-Royal. This was the copying of his more gifted brother's writings, later on those of his young uncle, Antoine Arnauld. Through his initiative, this work became a favourite one at Port-Royal, and, others joining, the important compositions of such Port-Royalists as Lancelot, Fontaine, and

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, i. p. 394.
[2] Oscar de Vallée, *L'Éloquence judiciare au dix-septième Siècle*, p. 437.

Du Fossé, whose memoirs and translations for many years existed in manuscript form only, were thus preserved,[1] none of them being printed before the middle of the eighteenth century.

Among the first recruits at Port-Royal des Champs at this time was another Arnauld, a young son of M. d'Andilly, called Arnauld de Luzanci. Through his father's influence, this boy had served for some time as a page to Cardinal Richelieu, after which he was made an officer in the garrison of Havre de Grace. Undoubtedly inheriting the pious instincts of his family, at eighteen, during a serious illness, Luzanci began to think of his soul's welfare, and, seized with a desire to imitate the example of his cousin De Séricourt, announced his intention of leaving the army and becoming a recluse.

On joining the workers at Port-Royal des Champs shortly afterwards, being neither learned nor lettered, Luzanci at once took to outdoor employment, and it was not long before he found his sphere of usefulness in a way most valuable to the nuns. Instituting a regular method of husbandry, he constituted himself the moving spirit in the direction of the work of tilling the ground of the farms neglected by insolvent tenants, and of superintending the labours of new hermits who gradually chose his department as their field of action. The first friend to join him was also a soldier of high station and reputation, called M. d'Eragny de la Rivière.

Originally a Huguenot of Vexin, now become a zealous Catholic, this gentleman, first cousin of the Duc de St. Simon, chose to leave a world which tried to hold him by many ties,[2] to give up all his possessions, with the object of coming to Port-Royal to care for its woods, a neglected source of former income. Throughout all later persecution, he never ceased to care for his beautiful trees, leaving them only during the Fronde, when, a garrison being stationed at Les Granges, he was unwilling to meet those who had known him in his previous life.

Never was a man harder upon himself, more regardless of the claims of his physical being, than M. de la Rivière. Eating but one meal a day, and that usually a plate of soup, he spent

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, i. p. 404.
[2] Du Fossé, *Mémoires*, i. p. 122.

his days in the forest, there in God's first temples shunning human society, and worshipping after his own fashion. This silent hermit was a great student, and although conversant with Italian and Spanish, learned Greek and Hebrew at Port-Royal without a master, so that he might be able to read the Bible in both languages.[1] For twenty-three years, M. d'Eragny de la Rivière lived on at Port-Royal, finally dying at the farm of Les Granges of a very acute and painful illness, which M. Hamon tells us he supported

"like the most humble patient and the most submissive of criminals under sentence of death."[2]

It was shortly before the First Dispersion that Singlin had a singular experience which led to the addition of one of the most self-sacrificing and eminent adherents ever known at the monastery. This was the visit to him in Paris of a priest called M. Charles Duchemin, who begged to be allowed to pass his days in the Desert in the exercise of penitence.

Having entered Holy Orders without any real contrition of heart or particular vocation, Duchemin had acted for some years as vicar of a parish in the diocese of Beauvais. Some extraordinary ordeal he went through seems to have aroused his conscience at last, but on applying for advice to several people, each and every one told him it would be best for him to return to his vicarage and continue the life he had been leading. Finally, hearing of Port-Royal and its methods, he felt that retirement there would suit his needs: hence his appeal to M. Singlin.

After some hesitation, Singlin consented to accept the penitent priest at the Champs, and, ridding himself of his ecclesiastical preferments, in the profoundest secrecy as to his former career, the new convert joined the Hermits of the Desert. From that day until his death, thirty-seven years later, the mystery of this singular man's identity was hidden in that of M. Charles of Les Granges, by which name alone he was known. Once only did he go forth from his retreat, and

[1] Fontaine gives us a lively picture of this Solitaire as walking in the mud all day long without food, and applying himself to the study of languages in order to join work of the mind with that of the body" (*Mémoires*, i. p. 319).

[2] *Histoire Abrégé de la Dernière Persécution de Port-Royal*, p. 385.

that was to receive an inheritance from his father—a sum which he immediately divided into two parts—one for the poor, the other for reparations on the monastery.[1]

To this most zealous of workers on the farm, religion took precedence of every preoccupation—even of care of his farm, domestics, horses, animals. Absorbing as his work might be, it never interfered with his prayers, and his life was one long series of austerities. Always provided with a devotional book for leisure moments, he slept but three hours at night, seldom talked to any one, and was a lesson to the community in his profound humility. At last, one day, feeling a great desire to be transported to that kingdom for which he had so long yearned, he prayed to God to deliver him from the miseries of the world. That very night, fever seized him, and in exactly eight days, at the hour of his prayer, his wish was fulfilled.[2]

Besides these hermits of high standing in the social and intellectual field, Port-Royal was blessed in domestics who were no less devoted to the cause. St. Cyran had begun that long line of Port-Royal hermits from the humbler walks of life by sending from his prison a convert he had made there of the nephew of one of his guards—a simple shoemaker's apprentice named Charles de la Croix, and Lancelot chronicles that a number of youths from different provinces felt moved to come and spend their lives in this solitude.[3]

Speaking of Charles de la Croix, "This youth," says Lancelot,[4] "was deformed and very poor in Nature's gifts, but very rich in the endowments of grace, which God had poured with abundance into his soul, converting him miraculously, and giving him the spirit of penitence to practise almost incredible austerities."

Charles de la Croix was soon followed by a ploughboy called Innocent Fai, than whom no high-born Solitaire was more pious or sincere. It was his habit to speak rarely, and then, says the memoirist, "only of edifying things." He was

[1] *Nécrologe de l'Abbaie de Port-Royal*, pp. 140–141. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] "The disinterestedness of some of these valets was such," says Lancelot, "that when the nuns afterward wished to assure them a pension, they could never be made to consent" (*Mémoires*, i. p. 342).

[4] *Ibid.* p. 340.

never idle, but even while ploughing he was engaged in reciting prayers he had learned by heart. His charity was a matter for wonder, for, not content with giving his wages to the poor, and despoiling himself of whatever small means he had, he used to go about barefooted because he had given away his boots. He died in 1660, aged thirty-nine.[1]

These first two domestics were followed by a number of others, all of whom were faithful in work and prayer and self-denial: one may read the edifying history of their lives in the *Histoire Abrégé de la Dernière Persécution* (1750). It is interesting to note that no difference was ever made at Port-Royal in the treatment of these servants and the other Solitaires. Port-Royal proved its spirit in this respect by the interring of all together—duke and peer by the side of ploughboy, hostler, farmer; poet-philosopher with the ignorant and unlearned. All were considered "brothers"; and Le Nain de Tillemont, Port-Royal's most famous pupil and priest, expressed the general sentiment when he wrote thus of the servants of the Champs:

"They are as noble as we, and a man owes nothing to his fellow but fellowship."[2]

[1] "We have had him buried in our church," said Mère Angélique, "and not in the cemetery where one puts the other domestics, and we esteem ourselves more honoured that his body should be there than that of a great lord" (Clémencet, *Histoire Générale de Port-Royal*, ii. p. 557).

[2] See Tronchay's *Life of Le Nain de Tillemont.*

CHAPTER III

DEATH OF JANSENIUS AND ST. CYRAN

"On ne doit pas se troubler du passé, pourvu qu'à mettre ordre comme il faut à l'avenir." *Lettres Chrestiennes de St. Cyran*

JANSENIUS'S later history shows him a man of action, and also a clever negotiator. Twice (in 1624 and 1626) sent by the University of Louvain to Spain to oppose the Jesuits in their desire to obtain there University privileges for their college, he acquitted himself with

"address, firmness, and great consideration for himself." [1]

Then again, being consulted by Flemish nobles, who, fearful of a Dutch invasion, were indignant at receiving no succour from Spain, his advice was to throw off the Spanish yoke, treat directly with Holland, and convert the country into cantons like the Swiss.[2]

He is also said to have suggested at this consultation the union of the French Catholics with the Dutch Protestants, and the creation of a religious body between the two beliefs,[3] an act which occasioned great excitement and roused public opinion against him. To correct this impression, and to propitiate Spain, also in a fine impulse of patriotism, in concert with President Roze, he published a Latin pamphlet called *Mars Gallicus*, against the prerogative of the most Christian kings, and particularly the policy of Richelieu in allying himself with Lutherans and Calvinists, painting very graphically the disasters which would thereby accrue to Catholic Germany. In this pamphlet, he also detailed the horrors of the siege of

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, i. p. 299.
[2] Rapin, *Histoire du Jansénisme*, p. 271.
[3] Père Daniel, *Traité Théologique*, Letter from the Abbé de St. Germain.

Tirlemont by the combined French and Dutch armies, and the atrocities committed toward the religious houses. The book was translated into French, and created a sensation, Richelieu being so incensed at the accusations it contained that he never forgave its author, some authorities asserting *Mars Gallicus* to have been the cause of all his later persecution of the friends of its author.[1]

The King of Spain, however, rewarded Jansenius by the bishopric of Ypres. But, though still absorbed in the *Augustinus*, the new Bishop did not allow literary work to interfere with the duties of his diocese. These he punctually performed, whether at the expense of health or the more personal interests of writing. His conscientiousness in this respect has been compared with its lack in a very learned French Bishop, M. Huet of Avranches. When any of the members of the latter's district came to consult him, they always found his door closed, and were told that *Monseigneur* was studying :

" Why do they give us a Bishop who has not finished his studies ? " they cried.[2]

The life of Cornelius Jansenius, patriotic, self-denying, and sincere worker, ended prematurely on the 6th May 1638. There are various stories as to the cause of his death. One credits him with catching the plague when it broke out in Flanders, and we are thrilled by the account of his heroism in going to the infected place, visiting the sick, dressing the most loathsome wounds, and taking food and medicine to the patients.[3] Another report asserts that although the dread disease had previously raged in Ypres, at the time Jansenius was stricken, there was no great epidemic of it in the country. That he alone took it, gave his enemies the opportunity of saying that he was overtaken by Divine anger and malediction. Clémencet tells us that his death resulted from touching some infected ancient manuscripts in the Archives.[4] Whatever the immediate cause, his early death was also the result of a constitution weakened by too-continued study and thought, for only fifty-three years of age, like Calvin, this great religionist

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, i. p. 303.
[2] *Ibid.* ii. p. 92.
[3] Schimmelpenninck, *Port-Royal*, p. 53.
[4] Clémencet, *Port-Royal*, iii. p. 230.

was worn out by the very intensity of his enthusiasm. It was only a few days before he fell ill that he finished his great work, and, making his will on his death-bed, his last act was to recommend the *Augustinus* to the Pope, saying that if the See of Rome wished to make any changes in the book, he was

"a child of obedience and obedient child of the Roman Church, in which I have always lived up to this bed of death."[1]

The epitaph placed upon Jansenius's tombstone in the old Cathedral of Ypres, beside the great altar, gave in epitome the estimate of him formed by sympathizers in his own day and country. It read:

"Here lies Cornelius Jansensius—comment enough: his virtue, his capacity, and his reputation say the rest. Long the admiration of *savants* in Louvain, regard for him only began there. He was raised to the episcopal dignity as a model for all Flanders, but appeared like the lightning-flash, extinguished at the moment of its illumination—such being the destiny of all things human, whose longest span is soon finished. . . . Yet he does not cease to live after death in his *St. Augustine*, of whom there was never a more faithful interpreter. He had something of the Divine in his spirit, and showed an indefatigable constancy in his work, his life ending with it."[2]

As St. Cyran's arrest took place only eight days after the death of Jansenius, there had not been time for him to learn the sad news; and during the first days at Vincennes friends were fearful of adding to the prisoner's misery by this last blow, especially as they were then not sure that the *Augustinus* had been finished. When at last they heard that it had, St. Cyran was told, and on its publication two years later he was one of the first to read the work, which he had not seen in its completed form. In many ways the contents were a surprise to Jansenius's collaborator, but on the whole he was so struck with admiration that he pronounced its place as a treatise on Grace to be third only to the writings of St. Paul and St. Augustine.[3]

[1] Ellies du Pin, *Histoire ecclésiastique du 17 Siècle*, ii. p. 51.

[2] Rapin, *Histoire du Jansénisme*, p. 371. In 1655 this inscription was destroyed and replaced by the simple words: "Hic jacet Cornelius Jansenius Episcopus Yprensis" (Ellies du Pin, *Histoire ecclésiastique du 17 Siècle*, ii. p. 51).

[3] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, ii.

At St. Cyran's interrogatory, which took place a year after his arrest, enemies failed to bring forward proofs of either Calvinism or heresy. Nevertheless, friends of the prisoner were unable to obtain his release from Vincennes. When the Prince de Condé wrote to Richelieu on the subject, the implacable minister's reply was :

" Savez-vous de quel homme vous me parlez ? Il est plus dangereux que six armées ! " [1]

Replying to others who demanded St. Cyran's liberation, Richelieu said :

" If people had only made sure of Luther and Calvin in the same way, one would not have seen torrents of blood inundating France and Germany during fifty years." [2]

After a short period of despair, the good Abbé endeavoured to make the most of his imprisonment. Characteristically, his first thoughts were for his disciples and the various souls under his spiritual care. He therefore sustained and comforted them by long letters—beautiful words of consolation, encouragement, and common sense, afterward published in two octavo volumes, and famous under the title of *Lettres Chrestiennes*. Like the flame of St. Augustine's fiery heart, the warmth of his influence burned through the thick walls of Vincennes, reaching out and permeating the worldly as well as the most righteous of his correspondents. It was in prison, too, that he wrote some important doctrinal treatises. But after epistolary and literary duties were done, there still remained time and enough and to spare for works of extraordinary goodness and charity to the poor unfortunates about him. He converted the governor of his prison, and although he himself needed clothes to protect him from the cold, he sold his most valuable books in order to buy clothes for his fellow-prisoners, who, not knowing whose hand had relieved their needs, and seeing St. Cyran destitute, whispered among themselves that his state was a judgment on his heresy.[3]

[1] " Do you know of what man you speak to me ? He is more dangerous than six armies ! " (Besoigne, iii. p. 394).

[2] Bausset, *Histoire de Fénélon*, p. 16.

[3] Schimmelpenninck, *Port-Royal*, p. 31.

A distinguished Dutch prisoner of war, who had been incarcerated near St. Cyran at Vincennes, was taken on his release in 1641 to the Palais Cardinal to see a wonderful ballet given by Richelieu. When asked if he did not admire the spectacle, at which were assembled the greater number of the prelates of Paris, Jean de Verth replied that he indeed found it very beautiful, but that the thing which most surprised him in the most Christian realm of France was to see "Bishops at the comedy, and Saints in prison." [1]

When, in 1643, St. Cyran's prison doors were at last thrown open, release was due not to Louis XIII, Anne of Austria, or to Cardinal Richelieu, but to the chances of Life and Death. On Holy Relics Day in December 1642, they were chanting in the churches the words of the Epistle :

"The fear of the Eternal prolongs one's days, but the years of the wicked shall be curtailed,"

as the great Cardinal lay dying—a man of only fifty-seven. And in February 1643, a decent time having elapsed after Richelieu's demise, all Vincennes was *en fête* over the Abbé's deliverance. With one accord, even the canons and prelates of the Cathedral turned out to congratulate him. His guards wept with happiness at his release, and with sadness at the thought of losing him from their charge. But, after five years confinement, privation, and hardship, the Prisoner of Vincennes was an old man, broken and bent by infirmities, and with the mark of Death plainly written on his features.

On his way home, St. Cyran, escorted by M. d'Andilly, who had begged the privilege of fetching him in his carriage, made various visits. At Port-Royal de Paris he was awaited with feverish impatience. Not being able to keep the good news of their chief's deliverance from the nuns, and yet not wishing to break the silence of the cloister, Mère Agnès had that very morning in the refectory invented an ingenious way of telling the story. Standing mute before the whole community, she slowly untied the girdle round her waist, thus to signify that God had broken the bonds of his servant. Every one understood, and the silent joy was intense.

Between the hours of five and six in the evening, having been notified of St. Cyran's visit, the nuns were assembled

[1] Racine, *Abrégé*, p. 28.

in the Parloir St. Jean to receive him. But when he arrived, the excitement was so great as to become hysterical—M. de Rebours, the confessor of the monastery, being the innocent cause of an outburst of merriment. This good priest was very near-sighted, and when St. Cyran entered, one of the nuns chancing to notice M. de Rebours peering in a very comical way at the Abbé through his lorgnette, she laughed light-heartedly. On hearing the sound, the rest of the community, in the exuberance of their relief, broke out simultaneously into irrepressible mirth.[1]

This hilarity did not please the Abbé, who was about to address words of solemn import to the nuns, so, turning away, he said gravely that he would wait a more fitting moment in which to converse upon weighty subjects.

For some days weariness prevented St. Cyran from going to his dear Solitaires at Port-Royal des Champs. Yet this visit lay even nearer his heart than that to the Paris monastery. And his reception in the country was of a different and much more solemn character, the Recluses receiving him almost as one risen from the dead. Through Fontaine we have a graphic picture of Le Maitre's throwing himself at the feet of the Abbé, of the latter's raising up his disciple, and embracing him tenderly, and of their subsequent exhaustive talk on spiritual and temporal matters.[2]

As he was leaving, St. Cyran expressed his admiration of the Desert, and remarked that he would reproach Mère Angélique for ever having left it.

But alas! it was not intended that the Master should remain much longer with his followers, and even his last months were not destined to be quiet or tranquil ones. A storm aroused by the publication of one of his prison works — a little catechism called "Familiar Theology," threatened again to engulf him and Port-Royal. Writing to Mère Angélique on the subject, the Abbé expressed his intention of upholding what he had written, saying that the weak are often more to be feared than the wicked, and that he would

[1] Lancelot, *Mémoires*, i. p. 211.

[2] In describing the joy of the Solitaires at seeing St. Cyran again, Fontaine puts in a very human touch by confessing that "la joie sans doute qu'on avait de revoir un tel homme, quoique incroyable en soi et presque infinie, ne laissait pas d'être tempérée par une *frayeur secrète* qui faisait rentrer tout le monde dans le fond de son cœur" (Fontaine, *Mémoires*, i. p. 161).

prefer seeing the whole monastery of Port-Royal destroyed rather than its discipline.[1]

Although friends at Court averted from the writer of the "Familiar Theology" for a time the consequences of his treatise, not long afterward the saintly Abbé was stricken down by apoplexy, and died in eleven hours.

To St. Cyran, Lancelot chronicled, death was a thing to be taken standing, his maxim being that a Christian should die at his labours. And this he literally did, for on the night before he passed away he was working hard, dictating to Lancelot a few so-called "Christian Thoughts," and also, strangely enough, what he termed "Some Points on Death."

This same faithful chronicler has given us a beautiful account of his master after death

"Gazing at the body," he says, "which was still in the same position in which Death had left it, I found it so full of majesty, and with so grave an expression, that I could not weary of admiring it, and I imagined that in this state he would have still been capable of inspiring fear in the most passionate of his enemies, could they have seen him." [2]

In his will St. Cyran had given M. d'Andilly his heart, on condition that his old friend retire from the world. M. Le Maitre begged to have as his portion those hands so pure and holy — how many times they had been raised to God, what truths written, and still they were fighting for the Church when God called their owner to Himself! [3]

The rest of the remains were then taken to the Church of St. Jacques du Haut Pas, where, amidst a tremendous gathering of bishops, archbishops, and nearly every prelate of Paris, the burial took place, St. Cyran being at the moment revered as a great saint and *savant*, and Port-Royal itself not yet having come under the opprobrium which was later to weigh it down.

St. Jacques du Haut Pas was indeed a fitting resting-place for the mortal remains of him to whom it embodied an ideal of church architecture, the rule for which was simple in the extreme:

"It suffices," he said, "if there be naught that is shocking in our style."

[1] Lancelot, *Mémoires*, i. pp. 204–223. [2] *Ibid.* i. p. 252. [3] *Ibid.* i. p. 257.

Later on, M. Hamon expressed the general Port-Royal belief that beauty of church architecture distracted the penitent from the inner emotions, when he described some people as being obliged to close their eyes while praying in churches which were too lovely.[1]

While St. Étienne du Mont, back of the Panthéon, in which Racine, Pascal, Le Maitre, and De Saci now lie buried, is still a wonder of Renaissance architecture, in which harmony and beauty result from line and form, whose very stones are impregnated with reverence and piety, and where there reigns a mysterious loveliness emanating from stained glass of wonderful lights and tints, St. Jacques is as sombre as the doctrine which shuts out from salvation all but the Elect. Naught but the principles of the Reform could have conceived this edifice, so bare of elegance of form, so devoid of the intoxication of line. On its walls are few ornaments of any kind; its sculptures are poor; its chapels reveal but a few paintings of indifferent merit; while the crudeness of daylight has full licence to penetrate unabashed through windows which lack the magic of stained glass. In it even the most imaginative mind could find no suggestion either of holiness or of pagan beauty, but would be forced to derive its spiritual food out of the wells of its own righteousness. Yet it displays artistic negation rather than distinct artistic crime. And in those days it stood on the very "hearth-stone of the spiritual life of Paris," [2] in that quarter which contained most of the religious houses of the city—the Visitation, the Ursulines, the Feuillantines, St. Magloire, the Carmel, the Bénédictins Anglais, Val de Grace, the Capuchins, Port-Royal. Now, St. Jacques du Haut Pas stands in a land of memories, in which almost forgotten names awaken visions in the heart of but the stray passer-by. Even its parishioners ignore its ancient history, although unconsciously they still retain its aroma.

For a time, the public considered St. Jacques the depository

[1] "Saint-Augustin a bien raison de dire que les lieux qui contentent les sens nous remplissent de distraction . . . et cela est si vrai, qu'il y a plusieurs personnes qui sont obligées de fermer les yeux lorsqu' elles prient dans les églises qui sont trop belles" (Jean Hamon, *Traité de la Solitude*, p. 101).

[2] André Hallays, *Pelérinage de Port-Royal*, p. 31.

of something very worthy of reverence. As one prelate expressed it the day of the funeral:

"M. le Curé, you have here a great treasure and precious charge." [1]

And, accordingly, from that day the tomb of the illustrious Jansenist became the centre for prayers, masses, and pilgrimages. Every Saturday, priests from Port-Royal came to say Mass near it, and many persons of quality journeyed all the way out to the shrine in the Faubourg St. Jacques to read his epitaph and to do him honour.[2]

Thus died the greatest man of Port-Royal's history, and with him perished in a great measure the original meaning of the message he and Jansenius had endeavoured to transmit to the world about them—a message which had in it no enmity to the Catholic Church, but a great exhortation to the reform and purification of the spirit of religion.

In course of time the memory of St. Cyran was attainted by those forces of hatred and envy which, begun before his death, continued long after the annihilation of Port-Royal was effected. Mistaken zealots cast upon him the slur of heresy and accused him of wishing to bring schism into the Church, ignoring the fact that his horror of any departure from the dogma as he understood it was such that, whenever he even took a heretical book into his hands, it was his habit to exorcize the evil spirit within it by the sign of the Cross, believing that the demon really resided therein.[3]

Moreover one of the very last acts of St. Cyran's life had been work on an extensive volume against Calvinism. The plan of this attack had been suggested to the writer by M. Charpentier's account of the state of religion in certain parts of France where Calvinism was rapidly gaining ground. Unhappily the execution of his scheme was first prevented by Richelieu, then by the arresting finger of Death.[4] If, as

[1] Du Fossé, *Mémoires*, i. p. 118. [2] Rapin, *Histoire du Jansénisme*, p. 507.

[3] "One should never read the books of Calvin or other heretics," said St. Cyran, "without previously having exorcized them, because these books have a secret malignity, which might surprise the strongest, if they were not careful to recommend themselves to God in reading them" (Lancelot, *Mémoires*, i. p. 226).

[4] The book against the heretics was not finished. Singlin said to the bishops who came to the funeral, that M. de St. Cyran was a David who had

Bossuet said, "A heretic is one who has an opinion," then St. Cyran was a heretic, not otherwise.

Although the epitaph composed by the friends of the Abbé de St. Cyran disappeared in course of time from the tombstone in the Church of St. Jacques du Haut Pas, its place there is still marked. The epitaph itself was strangely reserved as compared with those written by other of the Port-Royal epitaphists, but in a few words it summed up the Jansenist idea of the man who was their leader and their ideal to the end. It reads:

"Here lies Jean du Verger de Hauranne, Abbé de St. Cyran. He united—which is very rare—knowledge with the most profound humility. He had the most ardent love and zeal for the unity of the Church, the tradition of the Fathers, and the ancient truth. From the Catholic Church, unique object of his entire devotion, he wrote against heretics of our times. Profoundly regretted by all the French clergy and honest men, he died the 11th October 1643, aged sixty-two."

gathered together the materials for the building, but that a Solomon would be found to finish it (Lancelot, *Mémoires*, i. p. 227).

CHAPTER IV

A TRIO OF DÉVOTES AT PORT-ROYAL DE PARIS

I. La Princesse de Guéméné

"Quittons ces vanités, lassons-nous de les suivre;
C'est Dieu qui nous fait vivre,
C'est Dieu qu'il faut aimer."

François de Malherbe

THAT keen observer of human nature, Saint-Évremond, clearly recognized and analysed the motives of many *galantes femmes* of the day in going into religion, and there exists a curious letter [1] from him to a friend who is thinking of taking such a step, in which he urges her to examine her soul carefully lest she be one of those to whom

"God is a new lover who consoles for what one has lost";

or to whom

"Piety is a matter of calculation, and the mystery of a new spiritual influence."

On the background of the Paris monastery in the earliest days the portraits of three distinguished women are painted ineffaceably. Each had her own history of gallantry, tragedy, and sorrow; each seemed to have embraced the penitential life first through repentance for sins, secondly as a substitute and indemnity for coquetry. With the entrance of penitence into their hearts, the craving for excitement had not been extinguished, and as penitence precluded gallantry in the

[1] This letter was found in MS. at the Bibliothèque Nationale in the same package as that of Pascal's *Discours de l'Amour*, and is quoted by M. Victor Giraud in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Nov. 1907. It is now published in the *Œuvres Meslées* de Saint-Évremond (London, Jacob Tonson), tome i. p. 125.

usual sense, they were forced to derive from religion its only agitation, a continual crucifying of the emotions and desires.

Mère Angélique had not much faith in the discretion of either of the *mondaines*, who, on certain days of the week, were in the habit of making retreats at Port-Royal de Paris. She therefore dictated not only their prayers and penitential exercises, but the persons of the monastery with whom they might have converse. The story is told by one of the old historians, that on one occasion these three *grandes dames* elected to spend Christmas at Port-Royal. After dinner, Mère Angélique suddenly bethought her that her penitents had been talking together a very long time. Leaving the company she was in, she hastened to separate them, explaining that they would harm each other :

" A head-dress, a collar, or a fashion must inevitably crop into the conversation ; one must try to banish these devilries, which should not be allowed in Christian intercourse." [1]

The first *dévote* to associate herself with Port-Royal de Paris in the early days was, strangely enough, the most worldly-minded of the three, Anne de Rohan, Princesse de Guéméné. Anne de Rohan had been thrust very early upon the world through a marriage at the age of twelve (by papal dispensation) with her own cousin, Louis de Rohan, Prince de Guéméné, second son of the Duc de Montbazon, and brother of the notorious Duchesse de Chevreuse.

Tallemant des Réaux was impudent enough to say that without the order on his breast the Prince de Guéméné might have been taken for an " arracheur des dents." [2] At the time of the marriage, his sister, not yet Madame de Chevreuse, but wife of the reigning favourite of Louis XIII, the Connétable de Luynes, had already acquired a tremendous ascendancy over Anne of Austria, who had come to France only the year before, and who at this time was a timid, distrustful creature of uncertain and variable temper.[3]

The Montbazon trio : Madame de Montbazon, the young and beautiful stepmother of the Prince and his sister, Madame

[1] Besoigne, *Histoire de Port-Royal*, i. p. 205.
[2] *Historiettes*, vol. vi. p. 141.
[3] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, vol. v. p. 244.

de Chevreuse, and the Princesse de Guéméné, were kindred spirits—all three fascinating, all three intelligent, all three *galantes*. And as they were always together, Anne of Austria's Court was not devoid of excitement.

Of Madame de Guéméné, Saint-Gabriel, a contemporary writer, speaks in a curious book called *Mérite des Dames*, as "The Inimitable":

"She, the Day, the Light, are the loveliest works of Nature." [1]

Her admirers were legion, and the Prince, popularly supposed to be a "mari complaisant," rather encouraged, as Saint-Simon leads us to believe, the Montbazon trio in their frivolous life. Being thus attractive, Madame de Guéméné was the object of the deep jealousy, not only of the *grandes dames* of the Court, but of Madame de Chevreuse and the Queen herself. Madame de Motteville tells the story that on the days when there was a ball at the Palace, and the fair sex was pluming itself to look as bewitching as possible, the Queen and her ally, Madame de Chevreuse, to avoid the shame of being judged less charming than the Princess, resorted to artifices to prevent her from attending the assembly, Thus, meeting Madame de Guéméné on her arrival, and finding her glowing with loveliness, they would hasten to tell her she was looking very ill. Whereupon, without consulting her mirror, she would rush away and hide, leaving the field to them.[2]

Perhaps the Princesse de Guéméné's natural disposition to gallantry had been heightened by the very atmosphere of the house in which she lived, the Hôtel de Guéméné in the Place Royale having formerly been owned and occupied by that most unfortunate and short-lived *courtesane* of the period, Marion Delorme.[3] Yet history may be trusted to right itself. To-day the memory of both the *courtesane* and the lady of high condition has been eradicated by the refulgence of the poet, and the Hôtel de Guéméné is now pointed out in the modern Place des Vosges as the home of Victor Hugo.

It was said that those who loved Madame de Guéméné

[1] P. 298.
[2] Madame de Motteville, *Mémoires*, i. p. 39.
[3] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires* (Boislisle ed.), vol. v. p. 242.

were fated to some terrible end, and this would seem to be true from the fact that of four men who loved her devotedly, three —the Comte de Bouteville, the Duc de Montmorency, and François Auguste de Thou—died upon the scaffold, while the fourth, the Comte de Soissons, was killed by his own hand, though involuntarily. Added to this list, her second son, the Chevalier de Rohan, afterward met with a similar Nemesis.

Lancelot chronicles that this great lady

"gave herself to the Lord the summer following the year 1639, and that God used M. d'Andilly as the instrument to touch her." [1]

The attitude of St. Cyran's "Recruiter of Souls," as M. d'Andilly called himself, toward women, both in general and in particular, had always been that of admiration and respect. In one of his letters he avows his belief that women may serve the Church as well by their example as men by their doctrine.[2] Yet he had a peculiarity which Madame de Sévigné, writing retrospectively of the old days at Pomponne, humorously remarked :

"We chaffed *Bonhomme* d'Andilly because he would rather save a soul which was in a beautiful body than another." [3]

The fact was that with all the æsthete's love for beauty for its own sake, M. d'Andilly was never quite able to disassociate his delight in physical loveliness from his religious enthusiasm. It was no wonder, therefore, that he was especially zealous in his spiritual ministrations to one so young and marvellously blessed with the dangerous gift of beauty as the Princesse de Guéméné. Moreover, to win her to the Lord, would not only redound to his own credit, but be of great moment to the Society of Port-Royal.

The story goes that, paying the Princess a visit at her country house of Compurai, M. d'Andilly found her just coming home from Mass, where she acknowledged to have

[1] *Mémoires*, i. p. 324.

[2] "Les femmes peuvent aussi bien servir à l'église par leur exemple que les hommes par leur doctrine" (15 Mai 1640).

[3] Lettre à Madame de Grignan, 19 Août, 1676.

spent her time in imagining a new head-dress, radiating happiness, self-satisfaction, and carelessness so flamboyantly, that he was alarmed at her paganism, her content in temporal matters :

" Ah ! " he exclaimed, " I would you might be as rich in your soul as in these outward things."

These words, following upon the disasters which had happened to those she loved, struck so sudden a terror to the heart of his listener, that her conscience was touched at last, and she confided to M. d'Andilly her desire to seek solace for her frightened soul in the consolation of religion.

News of this conversion made a tremendous stir in the world. Knowing Madame de Guéméné's *galante* history, her old associates were very sceptical as to her sincerity.

The *Nécrologe* of Port-Royal relates that hitherto

" the world had pleased her, and she had pleased the world," [1]

but that God sent sorrows, such as the death of her four cavaliers, to induce her to retire within herself. At first M. d'Andilly hardly believed this miracle could happen. Yet, he reflected, all is possible to God, so, as St. Cyran was in prison and removed from possibility of direct personal influence, he appealed to Mère Angélique for advice with regard to his new penitent. She on her part then wrote to the Prisoner of Vincennes.

Like others, St. Cyran was not ignorant of Madame de Guéméné's moral record. Replying to Mère Angélique, therefore, he confessed that it was difficult for him to prescribe for the lady of whom she wrote.

The condition of this person, he said, seemed to him as the spark of God's grace illumined on a frozen pavement, where the winds blow from all sides :

" If God has lighted it," he wrote, " there is reason to hope that the spark will not be extinguished by the ice and the winds." [2]

At length, however, he was persuaded to write to the Princess herself to examine into the state of her soul. Thus,

[1] ii. p. 111.
[2] Lettre à la Mère Angélique, 12 Oct. 1639.

as her conversion occurred in 1639, the very first of those wonderful *Lettres Chrestiennes* written from prison was addressed to her, or, as he expressed it,

"To a Person, or Lady of high Condition." [1]

At Port-Royal, there was a tremulous joy over this black sheep who had come into their fold. It was too great an event to be talked of lightly. So they all joined in prayer for the persistence of the worldly woman in the paths of righteousness. Singlin afterward confessed to Lancelot that if this *grande dame* persevered, her conversion would be the greatest miracle of grace that had happened in the Church for a very long time.[2] In her anxiety, Mère Angélique wrote letter after letter to M. d'Andilly, enjoining the greatest caution and deliberation in his treatment of his new convert.

"We must pray to God for her," she wrote finally. "I think that, according to M. de St. Cyran's prediction, she will suffer greatly. The Devil and the World will not tolerate the affront she makes them, without avenging themselves; and the great force God is giving her, shows that He is preparing her for the combat." [3]

Mère Angélique was right. Both the Devil and the World were determined to have their revenge, and they had settled on the Coadjutor of Paris, afterward Cardinal Retz, as their agent. They could not have chosen a more competent person for the purpose than this strange prelate, who avowed quite frankly that he led a life of gallantry in order to free his mind of the melancholy which his profession nourished in the bottom of his soul.

In his *Mémoires*, written long afterward, the Cardinal describes the two forces ruling Madame de Guéméné at her conversion, and which were represented severally in his mind by himself and M. d'Andilly:

"Just fifteen days before this adventure [one of his own gallant escapades] the Devil appeared to Madame de Guéméné, and he came often evoked by the conjuries of M. d'Andilly, who forced him, I think, to inspire fear in his fair penitent,

[1] Lettre du 30 Oct. 1639.
[2] Lancelot, *Mémoires*, i. p. 324.
[3] Lettre du 16 Nov. 1639.

in whom he was more in love than I, but in God and quite spiritually.

"On my side," the gallant Churchman went on to explain, "I evoked a demon which appeared to her under a more benignant and agreeable form; he took her at the end of six months away from Port-Royal, where she made from time to time *escapades* rather than retreats." [1]

From the first, Madame de Guéméné never quite let go of the world. Having taken a house in the precincts of Port-Royal de Paris, she was in the habit of spending at least one day a week in the silence and quiet of the monastery. Her home was beside the church, above the sacristy, making one side of the cloister. Here she educated her youngest son, the Chevalier de Rohan.

But while retaining her apartment at Port-Royal de Paris, she also indulged her mundane luxurious tastes to the full at her home in the Place Royale. Visiting her here one day, the Prince de Condé remarked its general atmosphere of material comfort:

"Well, Madame," he exclaimed, "the Jansenists are not then as disagreeable as it is said they are, since all this adjusts itself with devotion? Here is the most beautiful place in the world; I think there must be great pleasure in praying to God here." [2]

Unfortunately St. Cyran was only too right in his premonition that the spark of God's grace vouchsafed to this "lady of high condition" might soon be extinguished by the ice and winds of a wicked world, for even the *Nécrologe* of Port-Royal, writing the epitaph of the Princess, had to admit that, although she lived more than forty-five years after her conversion, the latter part of her life did not correspond with the hopes engendered by her short period of repentance. For after some time she seems to have given up all pretence of piety, and thrown herself back again into secular and mundane ways.

Yet, strange to say, even while casting off the restraint of Port-Royal teaching, the Princess never quite severed her connection with the community, and there are a number of letters from Mère Angélique thanking the kind patron for gifts sent

[1] Retz, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 129.

[2] Barthélémy, *Les Amis de Madame de Sablé*, p. 211.

the monastery, for asylum offered the nuns in the Guéméné estate in Brittany, etc. After 1648, silence intervenes, and it was not until six years later that Mère Angélique divulged the secret of this taciturnity. Then to the Queen of Poland she wrote that the "poor lady," as she calls her, had much degenerated, and that she had returned to the world. *La pauvre dame* is not, the good Abbess continues, as bad as she is painted, although that she should be thus defamed is but a just judgment of God for her infidelity. After relating the fact that Madame de Guéméné still always attends sermon at Port-Royal de Paris, and that recently she has seemed touched, Mère Angélique concludes with one of her own maxims :

"Il est très facile de descendre, and très difficile de remonter. Mais Dieu peut tout, et sa miséricorde est infinie." [1]

History does not relate that the Prince de Guéméné's death in 1667 affected his wife very greatly. That her eldest son, who some years after her husband's death became Duc de Montbazon, had long been hopelessly insane, and was incarcerated in a Belgian convent, touched her more nearly. But all her heart was centred in her youngest-born, the debonnair Chevalier de Rohan, called the best-made and handsomest man of his time.

But alas ! the flaws in her idol were the very ones she had caused by her indulgence. Although she had selected Port-Royal's most pious ecclesiastic, M. Singlin, as preceptor for her son, she had not allowed that good man sufficient liberty as regarded discipline, and Louis de Rohan was consequently a mass of contradictions. Endowed with a brilliant mind, it sometimes seemed as if he had none. Possessing a fund of haughtiness and pride, and capable of acting courageously on occasion, he could nevertheless descend to the weakest and falsest of behaviour.

A plot in which the Chevalier de Rohan was implicated to excite an insurrection in Normandy, and to deliver over Quillebœuf to the Dutch and Spaniards, being discovered on the 26th November 1674, De Rohan and his confederates

[1] "It is very easy to descend, and very difficult to rise again. But all is possible to God, and His mercy is infinite" (Lettre à la Reine de Pologne, 21 Mai 1654).

were tried, convicted of treason, and on the 27th beheaded. Up to the last, the Chevalier had not thought to die, for his intention with regard to the Dutch and Spaniards was to secure their money, and then not to keep his word about delivering over the town. On going to trial, he was so confident this could be proved, that he appeared on the *sellette* in a new suit of clothes, and with " the best face in the world." [1]

Like those others who had loved Anne de Rohan, this son's fate was so tragic as to draw forth from the *insouciante* Madame de Sévigné the philosophical reflection :

" Il faut faire réflection sur l'état de ceux qui sont plus malheureux que nous, pour souffrir patiemment nos disgraces." [2]

Thus, in order that Madame de Guéméné might finally be brought back into the paths of righteousness, God had to send His greatest scourging, attacking her in that most vulnerable part, a mother's tenderness. And Sorrow, of which there is none greater, was the lever which raised her from the depths back into the light of Grace.

Strangely enough, in a last picture of Madame de Guéméné, we are reminded of St. Evrémond's *dévote*, who really wanted to be saved, but who, too weak to persist, failed on the road to holiness. Even after definitely separating herself from Port-Royal, and while walking in the ways of iniquity, this beautiful sinner could not help every now and then casting a longing eye backward to that pure and lovely refuge of peace from which she had voluntarily exiled herself. The World had conquered, but she was not content.

[1] Le Fare, *Mémoires*, tome lxv. p. 215.

[2] " We must think of the state of those more unhappy than ourselves, in order to patiently suffer our own afflictions " (Lettre à Madame de Grignan, 15 Octobre 1674).

CHAPTER V

A TRIO OF DÉVOTES AT PORT-ROYAL DE PARIS

II. Marie de Gonzague

> "Croirez-vous obliger tout le monde à se taire ?
> Contre la médisance il n'est point de rempart."
>
> Molière, *Le Misanthrope*

ALTHOUGH also a *galante femme*, Marie de Gonzague, daughter of Charles, Duc de Nevers, afterwards sovereign Duke of Mantua, was quite a different type from the Princesse de Guéméné. Her life-history was remarkable for its "ups and downs." Tallemant says:

"On a remarqué que jamais personne n'a eu tant de *hausses* qui *baissent* dans la vie que la Princesse Marie." [1]

Many historians testify to her beauty, and one memoirist in particular—albeit prejudiced—Michel de Marolles, goes so far as to say that she might be called The Glory of Her Age, both by the comeliness of her person and the admirable qualities of her mind.[2] Reporting this eulogy, and commenting upon the Dante-like devotion of Marolles for the Princess, to whom for twenty years he acted the part of "familiar man of letters, Latinist in Ordinary, Secretary, and Librarian," Sainte-Beuve classifies the Princess herself as inferior in intellectual attainments both to Madame de Guéméné, Madame de Sablé, and her own sister, Anne de Gonzague, Princesse Palatine. He admits, however, that she was endowed with those three wonderful characteristics, grace, liberality, and a charm which operated insensibly on her admirers.

The tragedy of the early part of her existence was a sojourn of fifteen days in the prison of Vincennes, where Marie de

[1] *Historiettes*, iv. p. 181. [2] Michel de Marolles, *Mémoires*, i. p. 101.

Médecis, on a suspicion that Gaston, her second son, seriously wanted to marry the poor Princess of Mantua, had her incarcerated. On the Queen Mother's disgrace shortly afterwards, the liberated Princess returned to Paris and endeavoured to forget her disappointement and chagrin in a life filled with pleasure. This she found among her many friends, and in the society of all the beaux-esprits and gallants of the Rambouillet and other Paris gatherings of the kind. Her own salon at Nevers, Marolles describes as especially delightful in point of conversation, where innocent raillery alternated with "the sweet and serious," malicious gossip and licence of any kind being tabooed.

This life, though delightful, was also very expensive, and, becoming involved in financial difficulties, to free herself Marie de Gonzague was tempted to listen favourably to the suit of the Marquis de Cinq Mars, who, though *Grand Ecuyer* and reigning favourite of Louis XIII, was not her equal in rank. Some memoirists assert that she accepted money from Cinq Mars, but that is probably only malicious gossip. Through her, Cinq Mars aspired to the office of Connétable de France, and as Richelieu was opposed to his ambition, the Equerry was foolish enough to join in a plot with Gaston d'Orléans against the Prime Minister. The plot discovered by the ever-astute Richelieu, Cinq Mars, with his friend De Thou, was tried and executed.

Through the mediation of the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, Richelieu's niece, Marie de Gonzague succeeded in recovering her letters to her former lover, but the affair could not fail to leak out in certain circles, and discredited her greatly for a time, especially as one of the notes found in the *cassette* of Cinq Mars ended with these words:

"Mon cher Ecuyer, travaillez à vous faire Connétable pour être digne de moi." [1]

In the depressed state of mind in which this sad experience left her, Marie de Gonzague turned to religion, and sought the friendship of Mère Angélique. Her introduction to Port-Royal was both momentous and tragic, for, intending to put herself under the direction of St. Cyran, and going to the Paris monastery for that purpose, the 10th October 1643,

[1] Amelot de la Houssaye, *Mémoires*, ii. p. 291.

she found herself in the midst of his funeral obsequies, and assisted, an uninvited guest at the agony and sorrow of his devoted Solitaires and penitents, joining in that weeping crowd of mourners of all ages, sexes, and conditions.[1]

This event did not chill her religious fervour, for, taking a little lodging at Port-Royal de Paris, like Madame de Guéméné and Madame de Sablé, she spent whole days there every week, often, as we have said, to the evident uneasiness of Mère Angélique. Like them, too, she was glad to be under the spiritual direction of St. Cyran's successor, M. Singlin. For some time her piety was admirable. She spent many hours in prayer and meditation, heard Mass regularly, and even fasted so rigorously that her household trembled for her health, until they remarked that fasting seemed to agree with her marvellously.[2]

It was not intended by Fate, however, that a princess of her rank and accomplishments should rest for ever under the quiet shadow of convent walls, nor was she devout enough to be able to resist that greatest of temptations—earthly glory. In 1644, Vladislas IV, King of Poland, who before his own marriage had much admired Marie de Gonzague, losing his wife, Cécile Renée d'Autriche, applied to the King of France for the hand of the Princess of Mantua.[3]

When asked if she would like to see a portrait of her prospective husband, Marie de Gonzague replied that it was not necessary, as she was not marrying the King but his crown!

All Paris was excited over the royal alliance, and Tallemant exercised his humour by telling of the wedding in the Chapel of the Palais Royal, when every consideration due a princess of the blood was heaped upon the Queen elect, Anne of Austria, as a delicate attention, even ceding to her, for the one day, precedence of herself. But Marie de Gonzague's triumph was truly complete only when she found herself taking precedence of the man who had once scorned her: Gaston d'Orléans.

The Grande Mademoiselle, his daughter, inheriting a dislike for the Princess of Mantua, and jealous as well, apropos

[1] Lancelot, *Mémoires*, i. p. 259.

[2] Besoigne, *Histoire de Port-Royal.*

[3] Jean Le Laboureur, *Relation du Voyage de la Reyne de Pologne*, 1647.

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of the festivities and rejoicings, remarked in her Memoirs, that

" quite enough people were bored by this royalty." [1]

A few days after the marriage ceremony, the new Queen retired to Port-Royal de Paris to recover from the fatigue of the fêtes; and, M. de Marolles tells us,

" In order to regain her usual piety." [2]

The correspondence with Mère Angélique, which gives the connection of Marie de Gonzague with Port-Royal a unique character, begins from the moment of the Queen of Poland's arrival in her new home, and continues for sixteen years. Through the over two hundred letters still in existence, we are enabled to follow the Queen's life in Poland almost day by day, throughout every vicissitude; and the whole story of Port-Royal's first period of persecution is graphically unrolled in Mère Angélique's letters, written with no suspicion of the fate which awaited her utterances, and full of her characteristic force and frankness. Indeed, it is principally through them that an insight may be gleaned of the most intimate thoughts of their unconscious writer—the most modest and retiring of women. Mère Agnès was in the plot to preserve these important epistles. In 1653 she wrote from Paris to a sister of the Convent of the Incarnation:

" Not one of the letters to the Queen escaped us while *Notre Mère* was at Port-Royal des Champs. I fear we cannot do our project so easily at present, because she writes late. There are several watchers established for the purpose." [3]

After Mère Angélique's death, the Queen corresponded regularly with Mère Agnès, who tried to take the place of her sister as guide. Unfortunately, very few of these letters have been preserved to us. The explanation is that Mère Agnès, great and beloved as she certainly was in the monastery, did not command the reverence awakened by the sterner Angélique. No one took the trouble to spy upon her and abstract copies of her letters for future publication. Doubtless

[1] *Mémoires de Mlle. de Montpensier*, i. p. 133.
[2] Michel de Marolles, *Mémoires*, i. p. 310.
[3] à la Sœur Dorothée de l'Incarnation Le Conte. 1er Aout, 1653.

by this neglect the world has lost many interesting human documents, a supposition which has become a conviction through the edition of Mère Agnès's letters published by M. Faugère. The eyes of Port-Royal were concentrated on Mère Angélique, and they therefore neglected to prepare her sister's "*dossier de sainte*," or certificate of saintship, in her lifetime, as they had done for the other.[1]

The strong advice on the religious life which the letters of Mère Angélique to the Queen of Poland contain, must have borne rich fruit in the conduct of the recipient,[2] for, to emphasize her piety, the *Nécrologe* relates that the Queen of Poland habitually wore a *cilice*, and that her charity "was truly royal." As time went on, there was full need of Mère Angélique's religious and spiritual solace, for in the royal palace Marie de Gonzague continued the alternate ups and downs of her former existence. Mère Angélique had foreseen this, and in one of her first letters warned her friend that in piety lay the greatest strength; on it alone depended happiness. All the rest, she wrote,

"is but nothingness; this pomp and grandeur which surrounds them, but like the smoke of perfumes agreeable to the sense, which evaporate in a moment." [3]

The first event that happened was the death in 1649 of Vladislas IV, followed by his widow's marriage to the new King, Jean Casimir, her brother-in-law. Of this union, Mère Angélique wrote:

"We see that the changes which happen to your Majesty makes no alteration whatever in your disposition and extreme goodness to us: which obliges us more and more to take part in your interests, and to pity you much in this new engagement." [4]

Yet in spite of Mère Angélique's fears, Marie de Gonzague seems to have been very united with her second husband.

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iv. p. 575.

[2] "She received my letters with joy," chronicled Mère Angélique, "and her Confessor wrote me that her household was ravished when she heard from me, for they perceived afterwards that she acted more gently, moderately, and charitably; that she pardoned faults committed against her, that she was more devout and restrained."

[3] Lettre du 27 Juillet 1646.

[4] Lettre du 12 Mai 1649.

Directly afterwards, the felicity and prosperity of existence at Varsovie so frightened her, used as she was to a balance of good and evil, that she asked her confidante to pray to God that this exceeding content be not followed by some great misfortune.[1]

Calamity was not long in coming to the house of Poland. First of all, the Queen lost her only children, two little girls; then the pest developed throughout the kingdom, and fierce wars with the Cossacks and Swedes kept the whole realm in a state of continual fear and distress.

Notwithstanding these terrible disturbances, the benevolence and kindness of the Queen to her subjects was ever active. In the freezing winter, she gave clothes and fuel to the poor, and had immense fires lighted in the public squares by which they might warm themselves. She also brought over from France Fathers of the Mission to instruct her subjects, and sisters of charity to nurse the sick and dying, and to educate young girls, whose future she herself provided for. It seemed as if, in that strange, cold, northern country, the French Princess tried to inaugurate a Port-Royal of her own.

In return for Mère Angélique's advice and counsel, which she craved unceasingly, Queen Marie displayed unparalleled generosity toward the dear friends who had always given her so fully of their spiritual goods. When persecution was threatening against Port-Royal, Mère Angélique wrote to thank the Queen for asylum offered in Poland, not only to the nuns and their leader, but to the Hermits as well.[2] At another time, Marie de Gonzague wrote at Mère Angélique's request to the Pope, with whom she was influential, to warn him not to believe malicious tales against the nuns and Solitaires.[3]

When grain was dear in France, she first sent 8000 livres of Polish wheat to alleviate the misery about her dear convent, then, later on, she donated 2000 livres in money to the Solitaires for a new building at Port-Royal des Champs, presented them with a magnificent pyx, some cloth of gold, and vessels of silver for their church.[4]

Indeed, this generous Queen would willingly have given away all she had in the world. When her friends remon-

[1] Tallemant des Réaux, *Historiettes*, vol. iv. p. 189.
[2] Lettre du 20 Mai 1655.
[3] Besoigne, *Histoire de Port-Royal*, i. p. 207. [4] *Ibid.*

strated with her on her prodigality, Marie de Gonzague replied:

"I do not wish to amass anything, for, no matter what property I have, if I should become a widow, I should always have enough to be received by Mère Angélique at Port-Royal des Champs."

Hearing of this remark, Le Maitre commented on it admiringly to his aunt. Characteristically the latter shook her head over the wisdom of receiving a Queen among the nuns of Port-Royal. For, while Mère Angélique always firmly believed in the virtue of Port-Royal's benefactor and friend, and steadily refused to credit any of the tales current as to her early indiscretions,[1] neither the Queen of Poland's generosity, nor her laudable attempt to conform to Port-Royal's sternest ideas of discipline in the matter of personal habits and luxuries, served to change her deep-rooted conviction with regard to people of condition. Such grand personages, she said, were apt to cause slackness and weakness in a monastery. Fortunately, therefore, the Abbess of Port-Royal was never confronted with the necessity of a decision in the matter, she herself being the first to pass away. Yet that the stern moralist had a strong regard for the Queen is ever apparent in her letters.

In any case, the monastery had much for which to thank Marie de Gonzague, and in its circles she was greatly beloved and sincerely mourned, when seven years after Mère Angélique's death she followed her friend to that kingdom in which both had so long been laying up treasures for themselves. Though one of the Great of the Earth, and born subject to God's anger, Marie de Gonzague too was a "Friend of the Truth," and as such belonged by spiritual affinity to Port-Royal.

[1] Le Maitre repeats Mère Angélique's assertion in this respect. He says (*Mémoires et Relations*, p. 212): "She told me that she knew certainly that God had always kept her chaste and pure up to the time of her marriage, although this was discredited by the scandal of the Court. That she hoped God would be merciful to her in that she had humility and goodness, and that she loved the Truth."

CHAPTER VI

A TRIO OF DÉVOTES AT PORT-ROYAL DE PARIS

III. La Marquise de Sablé

"Il faut une grace pour quitter le monde, mais il n'en faut point pour le haïr." Madame de Sablé

OF all the numerous examples of that class of religious phenomena called *dévotes*, none was more peculiar or characteristic than the Marquise de Sablé. Allied to the literary and social life of the century, remarkable for gifts of mind and genial fellowship, her name is yet unavoidably linked with the internal and intimate history of Port-Royal de Paris. And throughout the troubled annals of persecution and controversy attaching to the so-called Jansenists and their friends, her personality never fails to awaken amusement and sympathy by its inconsistencies and vagaries, the very weaknesses of her character lending charm and meaning to the uncompromising austerity of her spiritual mentors and guides.

Born in 1599, on the very threshold of the seventeenth century, the early life of Madeleine de Souvré, Marquise de Sablé, would be obscure in the extreme were it not for the ingenious suppositions of her biographer, M. Victor Cousin, who divined in her the original of the Princesse Parthénie in Mlle. de Scudéry's novel, *Le Grand Cyrus*.[1] It tells us she was tall, of fine figure, lovely eyes ; that her throat was the most beautiful in the world, her complexion admirable, her hair blonde, her mouth agreeable :

> "What a store of charms and beauty!
> Force of mind and sweetest mien!
> Savage would each liberty
> Taken in her presence seem.

[1] V. Cousin, "Madame de Sablé et Voiture" (*La Société Française au XVII Siècle*, ii. 3).

Who so dull as not to see
The Graces now are more than three ? " [1]

sang, apropos of Madame de Sablé, the brother of the author of the *Grand Cyrus*, Georges de Scudéry, in his Cabinet de Curiosités.

Brought up in Touraine, the father of Madeleine de Souvré was the distinguished Marquis de Courtenvaux, whom in gratitude for services rendered him in the battle of Courtras, Henri IV had made Governor of the young Louis XIII, with baton of Maréchal of France. Naturally, the daughter was surrounded from her earliest years with flattery and adulation. Thus it is curious that politeness, whose essence is surely kindness of heart and unselfishness, has been considered her most marked characteristic. Yet the contrasts in her nature were so vivid as to allow both of this encomium of M. Cousin's, and M. de Sainte-Beuve's dictum that she was :

" Ingénieuse, friande, et peureuse." [2]

That the young Mlle. de Souvré was also extraordinarily romantic and *précieuse* in matters of gallantry, belonging to the early Rambouillet circle, and drawing her ideal of love from Spanish and Moorish models, is testified by Madame de Motteville. To the future Marquise, love meant smiles and sighs, protestations of devotion couched in hyperbole and poetical similes, by the lover too respectful and timid to approach near enough to touch the garment of his lady-love. Unfortunately the great gallantry of her life was concentrated on the unhappy Duc de Montmorenci.

On meeting Madeleine de Souvré before her marriage, this ideal hero of romance and tragedy at once became violently enamoured, and it was not difficult for the much-sought-after gallant to awaken a like passion in the breast of the romantic lady of the Court, who doubtless failed to realize that, although elegant, gay, and brave, Duc Henri de Montmorenci was not particularly intellectual or spiritual.

[1] " Que d'attraits et que de beaute !
Que d'esprit et de complaisance !
Quelle farouche liberté,
A pu tenir en sa présence ?
Et qui ne voit, à cette fois,
Que les Grâces sont plus de trois ? " (p. 147).

[2] " Ingenious, timid, and dainty " (*Port-Royal*, ii. p. 207).

Gestures, it would seem, stood him in place of brains:

"How happy that man is to have arms!" exclaimed a wit of him on one occasion.

"He did not talk nonsense," says the same chronicler, "but he had a *short* mind."[1]

Fêted on all sides, the amorous soldier soon tired of this love *à la précieuse*, and discovering that his eyes were looking higher, even to the throne itself, Madame de Sablé promptly shut him out of her life, and from that moment banished gallantry from her existence, finding thereafter her solace in the colder emotion of friendship.[2]

At the age of fifteen, without her own volition, Mlle. de Souvré was married to Philippe Emmanuel de Laval Montmorency, Marquis de Sablé. At this period, she might have easily been conquered by the love of an honest husband. But unfortunately, although before his marriage a most ardent lover, soon after the ceremony the Marquis became in his turn indifferent, quickly developing into a faithless and cruel master. Their union, which lasted twenty-six years, was far from happy. It had but one fortunate effect: in the early days of her marriage, under the influence of the Marquis's indifference and dislike, Madame de Sablé retired to her estate of Sablé in the country. Here, in the quiet and solitude, she found consolation and relief in study, thus acquiring the knowledge and intellectual poise for which she became so noted.[3]

When, in 1640, the Marquis de Sablé died suddenly, all the four children had thrown off family ties. The only daughter was a nun at Rouen; the eldest son, afterward Bishop of La Rochelle, was busy making his own very prosperous career in the Church; the second son was a volatile personage of little comfort to his mother; the third son, the pride of the family, was a soldier in the service of the Great Condé. Thus widowed and bereft of her children, leaving the neighbourhood of the

[1] Tallemant des Réaux, *Historiettes*, iii. p. 95.

[2] *Madame de Sablé*, p. 31.

[3] "The qualities of Madame de Sablé consisted," says Sainte-Beuve, "in a veritable distinction and a certain solidity of mind, which caused Arnauld to send her the Preliminary Discourse of the *Logic* to divert her and have her advice, and La Rochefoucauld to consult her on the matter and form of his Maxims" (*Port-Royal*, v. p. 54).

Louvre, Madame de Sablé removed to the Place Royale, where her intimate friend, the Comtesse de Maure, joined her.

This friend and consoler of Madame de Sablé's widowhood and after life was also a famous *précieuse* and woman of intellectual attainments. Their acquaintance had begun at the Court of Marie de Médecis, where Mlle. Anne d'Attichy, like Madame de Sablé, filled the position of Maid of Honour. Even in her youth, Madame de Maure had been a most peculiar person who reversed the actions of the rest of the world.[1] Of delicate health, her mind was yet so keen that, although when people were talking to her her spirit was in the habit of wandering off on several voyages of its own, she always returned from dreamland in time to answer most pertinently, showing that throughout she had understood what was being said.[2]

The great bond between the Comtesse de Maure and Madame de Sablé was their mutual terror of contagious illness. Living together in the same house in the Place Royale, these two dames sometimes did not see each other for three months at a time, the least cold preventing all communication, their intercourse being carried on by letter.

The Grande Mademoiselle, so quick to see the defects of those about her, could not fail to perceive the humour in the character of Madame de Sablé, and in the *Princesse de Paphlagonie*[3] she describes the life led by the two friends. They were occupied in concerting means by which they might avoid death and render themselves immortal. Their conferences on this important subject were not held face to face, but by writing from one room to another, each hypochondriac being afraid of draughts, dampness and dryness, the weather, and a thousand unforeseen accidents.

"C'étaient des princesses," concludes Mademoiselle, "qui n'avaient rien de mortel que la connaissance de l'être."[4]

[1] "One may say with truth," said the Marquis de Sourdis, "that the Comtesse de Maure would be a perfect person if she only could, like the rest of the world, subject herself to clocks" (portrait of Madame de Maure in *la Gallerie de Portraits de Mlle. de Montpensier*, p. 140).

[2] Mlle. de Scudéry, *Le Grand Cyrus*, tome ix. p. 548.

[3] *Œuvres* de Segrais, tome i. p. 251.

[4] "They were princesses," concludes Mademoiselle, "who had nothing mortal about them, but the knowledge of being so" (*ibid.* p. 252).

As early as 1640, the year of her husband's death, Madame de Sablé had been in communication with Port-Royal through Mère Angélique, and soon after this time she began making retreats at Port-Royal de Paris, "without having been touched in any marked way by Divine Grace."[1] In 1646 the great sorrow of her life came to strengthen this slight tendency toward religious retirement, for in that year she lost her third and favourite son in battle. This son, Guy de Laval, belonged to that class of soldiers known in the *Grand Siècle* under the title of "Petits Maîtres." These men were friends and followers of the Great Condé. They accompanied him alike into battle, intrigue, amusement, or danger of any kind whatsoever—a band of gentlemanly dare-devils, always first and foremost wherever they went.

Guy de Laval was one of the handsomest and bravest of this corps. Every one loved him, and his mother, of course, did more—she adored him. After distinguishing himself at Rocroy and Thionville, he was killed at the age of twenty-four at the siege of Dunkerque.

For a long time the Marquise de Sablé was overwhelmed by this calamity, unable to again take up the threads of an interrupted existence, which was made more difficult just at this time by the loss of her fortune. Obliged to sell her estate of Sablé and to retrench in various ways, she yet had sufficient strength to react from sorrow and misfortune, and, calling upon her intellectual resources to aid her, she resumed her everyday round, again visiting the Rambouillet, and frequenting the soirées of the Grande Mademoiselle at the Luxembourg.

These pleasures were interrupted by the Fronde and its excitements, during which troublous time, Madame de Sablé, with extraordinary talent, managed to maintain peaceful relations with both Frondists and Royalists.[2] The Fronde over, her religious enthusiasm culminated in a firm decision,

[1] In her great charity, nevertheless, Mère Angélique wrote of Madame de Sablé: "Elle se sépare le plus qu'elle peut du monde, et sincèrement elle veut être toute à Dieu" (Lettre à la Reine de Pologne, 21 Mai 1654).

[2] "Sans avoir le génie politique de la Palatine, et sans être mêlée autant qu'elle aux agitations des partis, Madame de Sablé intervint toujours, comme la Palatine, pour adoucir les divisions et concilier les intérêts. . . . Aussi la guerre civile n'otâ pas un seul ami à Madame de Sablé" (V. Cousin, *La Marquise de Sablé*, p. 32).

in consequence of which, leaving the Place Royale and Madame de Maure — who did not altogether approve her new move, she joined herself definitely to the monastery of Port-Royal de Paris, building there a small house fronting on the Rue de la Bourbe—at the end of the choir, forming part of the chapter-house. Here the salon, modelled after the Rambouillet, was small but aristocratic, also not a little *galant*, in spite of a flavour of the spirit of religion which inevitably penetrated through the doors separating the domain of Madame de Sablé from her sainted neighbours.

Notwithstanding this highly intellectual and ideal tendency which attached to the Port-Royal salon of the Marquise de Sablé, for a long time the atmosphere there was not the less worldly. It seems to have been tinged with those material pleasures with which people of godly inclinations are ofttimes reproached, and which were especially imputed to the Jansenists.

M. de Gondren, Archbishop of Sens, is accredited with extremes in this kind. He offered his Jansenist friends most sumptuous feasts, and was himself the inventor of a costly perfume with which he saturated the wax candles used at his dinner-table. Under each plate, too, his guests found a pair of perfumed gloves. This prelate was, nevertheless, called the Successor of the Apostles, the imitator of their virtues, and he branded the Jesuits and the Capuchins together as corrupters of morality and seducers of souls.[1]

One of the Marquise's friends, the Abbé de la Victoire, himself a great judge of such matters, is reported to have said that the Devil having been banished from Madame de Sablé's bedchamber and cabinet, habitually took refuge in her kitchen.[2]

It is most piquant to read in the letters of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld of the combination of intellectual commerce and gustatorial interest which reigned between him and Madame de Sablé. The Port-Royal influence is probably accountable for the fact that in this drawing-room it became the habit for Madame de Sablé and her guests to discuss the highest ethical subjects, and to make moral reflections or maxims of their own.[3] Going to her house there, the

[1] Ricard, *Les Premiers Jansénistes*, p. 111.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] As Sainte-Beuve said: "Madame de Sablé's salon was the grand laboratory of the Maxims" (*Port-Royal*, v. p. 67).

Pessimist of the Fronde found it delightful to solace his wounded feelings by making moral reflections descriptive of the hypocrisy, unfaithfulness, and general degeneracy of mankind. Madame de Sablé met him on this common ground, believed in him, herself wrote Maxims, criticized his, and incited him to new ones, finally inducing him to make a collection of his own for publication. In revenge for his maxims, for, as he reminded the Marquise, one does not give away things for nothing, the Duke demanded all sorts of culinary dainties at her hands. On one occasion, sending her eight maxims, he asked in return :

"A carrot soup, a ragout of mutton and one of beef, some green sauce, and yet another dish, with a capon stuffed with prunes, or anything else you may judge worthy." [1]

Neither Madame de Sablé's own maxims, clever as they were, nor the other details of her life show her to have been particularly spiritual or religious ; and, without a key to her reasons for entering Port-Royal, it would be difficult to understand why she joined herself to the monastery at all. As Sainte-Beuve puts it, she always had one foot in the world and one eye on the cloister, or, according to a still more epigrammatic utterance,

"Madame de Sablé was only the most *spirituelle* of the Incurables of Port-Royal." [2]

With her usual wisdom, Mère Angélique, when discussing Madame de Sablé's proposed annexation to Port-Royal de Paris, had feared this close juxtaposition of the worldly to the conventual atmosphere, and had stipulated that neither Madame de Sablé's household nor her visitors should be allowed to look into the adjoining buildings. This caution was necessary, as only a short passage-way separated Madame de Sablé's house from the inner monastery. On her part, on entering the precincts of Port-Royal, the latter covenanted that neither the number of all persons in the infirmary nor the nature of their illnesses be hidden from her.

The Marquise had now reached the age of fifty-four, and the peculiarities of her youth had already become very pro-

[1] *Lettres*, p. 149. [2] *Port-Royal*, ii. p. 77.

nounced. Although from the first, Mère Angélique endeavoured to make a strong character of the Marquise, and constantly had her on her mind, even when death came, it was naturally with Mère Agnès, the head of the Paris monastery at this time, with whom Madame de Sablé had most to do. Through the interminable letters which passed between the little house fronting on the street, by way of the communicating door leading into the monastery into the office of the Abbess, we realize that the Marquise was certainly no very easy person to manage, that in fact she was a veritable thorn in the flesh of the whole community. Often the mystical Mère Agnès must have found it well-nigh impossible to preserve her attitude of intellectual and spiritual aloofness when dealing with the Marquise. Yet she was a marvel of patience and good humour, and her motto in answering all her penitent's complaints was :

"The more one takes away from the senses, the more one gives to the mind." [1]

On one occasion we learn that Madame de Sablé, in consequence of a severe cold, is unable to enjoy the scent of the bouquet picked for her each day in the Abbey garden ; and that as usual Mère Agnès has been called upon to calm her devotee's agitation, this time over a feared loss of the sense of smell. After commenting upon her own lack in this regard, she having lost her perception of odours when very young, Mère Agnès reminded the Marquise that flowers were a joy to look at as well as to smell. Again, when a too sensitive development of the same organ led the Marquise to distinguish the odour of candles being made in the convent, Mère Agnès calmly meets her threat of leaving the monastery, by having the factory removed to the far end of the garden.

Even Nature was expected to change for the sake of this exacting dame, and another of Mère Agnès' letters answers the complaint that the Marquise has no sun in her room.

"It is enough," she wrote, "that your tribune in the Church should face the East, and that you should be exposed to the Sun of Justice, which is our Lord Jesus Christ.

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries du Lundi*, tome xiv. p. 157.

You will find without doubt on that side the health of your soul and your body, as much as it pleases God to give you." [1]

Yet when all is said and done with regard to the various shortcomings, littlenesses, and inconsistencies of Madame de Sablé, it is hard to believe that she was quite as "intriguing, mischief-making, noisy and curious" as Sainte-Beuve would have us think. M. Faugère, in his *Introduction* to the letters of Mère Agnès, speaks of Madame de Sablé as

"that distinguished woman who refined upon all the commodities of life."

And many persons both within and without the monastery testified to her insight into human life, its passions and pitfalls, giving her credit at the same time for kindness and humanity. Mère Angélique celebrated her knowledge of the passions, distastes and allurements of society, M. d'Andilly considered some of her *thoughts* as showing ripe experience of a world of exquisite refinement, while La Rochefoucauld went so far as to credit her with a comprehension of the inmost recesses of the human heart.[2]

Madame de Sablé had none of the pious veneration of the other penitents for Port-Royal des Champs. From the first, indeed, she had declared herself to be a fixture in Paris.[3] She would not even visit the monastery in the country, being afraid of the stagnant pond, and possible germs she might find lurking there. During the persecutions in the Paris house she did not once interrupt her worldly interests. It was, in fact, in 1665, at the very climax of the troubles of the monastery, that La Rochefoucauld's maxims were published, and, without compunction or thought of her friends in trouble, Madame de Sablé interested herself heart and soul in them. At another time she calmly removed herself and her salon from the Faubourg St. Jacques to the house of her brother, the Commander de Souvré, Rue des Petits Champs. Moreover, when Port-Royal de Paris fell into the hands of anti-sympathizers, Madame de Sablé did not

[1] Lettre du 23 Oct. 1663.

[2] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, v. pp. 51–80. In his *Causeries du Lundi*, book iv. p. 103, the same writer tells us that "Madame de Sablé, la spirituelle amie de La Rochefoucauld, n'écrivait pas un mot d'ortographe."

[3] "Elle avait des l'origine, fait voeu de stabilité pour Paris" (Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, v. p. 74).

discontinue her relations with it, but became quite as friendly with the usurpers as she had been with the real Port-Royalists.

How, then, may we interpret her connection with the monastery? The *raison d'être* seems best explained on the basis of the analysis made by M. Faugère:

"Madame de Sablé," he said, "came under the roof of Port-Royal much less to associate herself with its austere practices than to seek a shelter against the terrors of death." [1]

This peculiar and particular fear of hers was well known in her day, and Tallemant relates that, having his image always before her thoughts, she did not wish to court Death's brother Sleep. That she might never slumber profoundly, either her doctor or her maids were detailed to watch her from the moment she lay down. In their hands they held a lighted candle, so that when she opened her eyes she might at once see its reassuring gleam.[2] It was probably for her that La Rochefoucauld made the following maxim:

"Few people understand death; they suffer it not by resolution, but by stupidity, and by custom, and most men die only because they know not how to prevent dying." [3]

In 1663, when the Comtesse de Maure was dying, Madame de Sablé sent Chalais to inquire for her.

"But," said she, "take care that you do not tell me she has passed away."

Chalais arrived at the Comtesse de Maure's just as she was expiring. On his return Madame de Sablé said:

"Well! Chalais, is she as ill as she can be? Is she no longer able to eat?"

"No, Madame," responded Chalais.

"Does she no longer speak?"

"Still less."

"Does she not hear?"

"Not at all."

"Is she then dead?"

"Madame," replied Chalais; "at least it is you who have said it, not I." [4]

[1] Faugère, *Introduction* aux Lettres de la Mère Agnès Arnauld, p. xvi.
[2] *Historiettes*, vol. iii. p. 85. [3] See Lettres La Rochefoucauld, p. 149.
[4] *Historiettes*, vol. iii. p. 84.

On one occasion, having lost her appetite, Madame de Sablé grew very sad, remembering that a distaste for food was evidenced by Mère Angélique some time before her death.

"My dear Sister," wrote Mère Agnès, "you are very far from the distaste of our late Mother; hers was a distaste of Death—yours is but passing." [1]

At this unguarded mention of Death, Madame de Sablé took such a fright that Mère Agnès was obliged to write again reprimanding her, and adjuring her to make war on all the black thoughts which tormented her, and which, she said, would grow darker the more she allowed them headway.

But it is delightful to learn that although no power could ever suffice to entirely rid the "Maniacal Marquise," as she was called, of habits acquired during many years—the brunt of which it was the good fortune of Mère Agnès to bear—as time went on the serene and beautiful influence of Port-Royal so near her had its effect in lessening these littlenesses, these vague terrors. For toward the end of her life, penetrated inevitably by the spirit of Port-Royal, Madame de Sablé became ever more penitent, more resigned, and more tranquil. Even her fear of the last Terror seemed to diminish, and in 1678, at the age of eighty, she finally passed on to that plane where there is no death, gently and humbly, her dying wish being to be buried, not in the great armorial vaults of the Souvrés or of the Montmorency-Lavals, nor even to be honoured by sepulchre at Port-Royal itself, but to be interred like any ordinary citizen of her quarter, in the parish burial-ground.[2] Her remains still lie, therefore, in that curious old church, St. Jacques du Haut Pas, where so many distinguished fellow-penitents and Jansenists found rest for their ashes.

And the honest souls of Port-Royal, in writing the Marquise's epitaph for their *Nécrologe*, found only this to praise in her—whom, nevertheless, they designated as "the very particular friend and benefactor of Port-Royal de Paris"—her humility! [3]

[1] Lettre du 18 Oct. 1663.

[2] Victor Cousin, *La Marquise de Sablé*, p. 303.

[3] "Les sottises d'autruy nous doivent estre plutost une instruction qu'un sujet de nous moquer de ceux qui les font" (maxim de Madame de Sablé).

CHAPTER VII

THE LETTER OF THE LAW AGAIN. BEGINNING OF PERSECUTION. THE "BOOK OF THE FREQUENT COMMUNION"

"The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you"

FROM boyhood, Antoine Arnauld had developed unusual traits of intelligence and piety. Educated in the College of Lisieux, he made the law his special study, and at first seemed to incline to the legal profession. It was his mother who finally persuaded him to forsake the calling of his forbears for a study of theology. And, entering the Sorbonne at her suggestion, he was just about to take the second step in his Sorbonnical evolution when, being assailed by some doubts, he applied to St. Cyran for their resolution. With his usual perception the latter understood where the trouble lay, and, gaining the confidence of the young student, endeavoured to help him by attacking the most vulnerable point—worldly vanity.

"The doctrinal dignity," he wrote, "has deceived you, even as Beauty deceived the two elders" (alluding to the well-known story of Suzanne and the Elders).[1]

This letter was followed by other long epistles. At first Arnauld was timid about resigning himself wholly to St.Cyran's influence, being afraid the Abbé would require him to give up the finishing of his licentiate and the Sorbonne altogether. He was relieved when St. Cyran advised him to remain where he was, and to go on with his degree :

"Prayer and fasting twice a week," said his mentor,

[1] Lettre du 27 Décembre 1638.

" will serve as sparks to illuminate the desire you have to vow yourself to God," [1]

adding that the brilliant student might build himself an interior library wherein he could labour to transfer the science from his head to his heart. There transformed, it could issue forth and be spread abroad as God willed.

St. Cyran was directly responsible for the *Book of the Frequent Communion*. At the time of the great storm induced by the publication of the *Augustinus*, he himself was powerless to defend the principles which the book of Jansenius embodied. He appealed therefore to Antoine Arnauld, the disciple in whom of all others he had recognised great intellectual possibilities, and in whom his prophetic vision already foresaw the future head controversialist of Port-Royal.

Although his disputatious nature might in any case have led Antoine Arnauld to defend the ideals of his friends, his native inclination worked upon by St. Cyran's counsels was solidified at this moment by a last message from his mother, who in 1641 was on her death-bed at Port-Royal de Paris. To have permitted a layman to go into the nuns' quarters there, even to receive the blessing of a dying mother, would have been to the stern disciples of St. Cyran " too great a concession to nature." Lancelot relates that Antoine Arnauld, going to stay all night at Port-Royal, asked Singlin to allow him to serve as a clerk in surplice at the ceremony of the Extreme Unction administered to his mother, but Singlin did not think it right to have more than one officiating priest, and De Saci had already been appointed. Antoine therefore begged Singlin to at least bring him a message from his mother—some word that all his life he might consider not only as her final utterance, but as the expression of God's will concerning him. Accordingly, through Singlin, the dying Madame Arnauld exhorted her " last son," as she called him, to keep in humility the vow of his priesthood, though it cost him a thousand lives ; and never to relax in his defence of the Truth, the Truth belonging not to him, but to God alone.[2]

In itself this solemn advice would have been sufficient for so dutiful a son, but in February 1643, Arnauld received a long

[1] Lettre du 4 Janvier 1639.
[2] Lancelot, *Mémoires*, i. p. 322.

ANTOINE ARNAULD

FROM A BRONZE BUST IN THE LOUVRE

letter from St. Cyran, containing still more inflammatory words.

"If until now," he wrote, "silence has been best, the time to speak, when to keep silent would be a crime, has at last arrived. Lest sensible persons think us in fault, do not hesitate longer, nor be deterred by fear of further harm accruing to me in prison."

The letter then concluded thus:

"We must follow where God leads, and do nothing in a cowardly way."

These exhortations from the two people he most revered in the world had an extraordinary effect upon Arnauld, and they are the keynote of his whole after-life. They explain the fact that his defence of the Truth as he understood it continued through exile, poverty, and ignominy, until the eighty years of his earthly pilgrimage were over.

It was after his mother's death and St. Cyran's letter, before taking the priest's robe and while buckling on his armour for the fight, that the incident which determined the nature of his attack occurred. This was a chance interview between the Princesse de Guéméné and Madame de Sablé, two ladies whom one day in laughing playfulness and apropos of Arnauld's book the Duc de La Rochefoucauld called *The Founders of Jansenism.*[1]

In early life Madame de Sablé had been under the influence of the famous Jesuit, Père Cotton; after her marriage, her director was another Jesuit named Sesmaisons.[2] Like other persons of quality in those days, she was in the habit of taking the Holy Communion every month. Her friend, the Princesse de Guéméné, on the contrary, in the height of her then recently acquired enthusiasm for the teachings of Port-Royal, followed strictly the instructions of *Ces Messieurs* by communicating much less frequently. It happened that directly after Madame de Guéméné had made one of her rare communions, Madame de Sablé urged her to go to a ball. Madame de Guéméné indignantly refused; and, full of the spirit of Port-Royal austerity, took upon herself to criticize the too frequent communion of her friend. This being a direct animadversion of Jesuit principles, Madame de Sablé at once reported the words

[1] Rapin, *Mémoires*, i. p. 29. [2] *Ibid.* p. 33.

of Madame de Guéméné to her confessor Sesmaisons, who to justify himself gave Madame de Sablé an extract from Molina's book, in which the great authority scientifically established his reasons for frequent communion.[1]

The next time they met, therefore, Madame de Sablé presented Madame de Guéméné with Père Sesmaisons' pamphlet on the subject, in which, among other things, it was authoritatively stated that the more one is devoid of grace the more boldly one may approach the Eucharist.[2] Although while showing this to Madame de Guéméné, Madame de Sablé begged the Princess to keep the matter to herself, the Jansenist enthusiast felt it her duty to show the pamphlet to St. Cyran.

In his Preface, Arnauld gives an account of how he came to write the *Frequent Communion*. Acknowledging to have been at first disinclined to answer the question brought up by Père Sesmaisons, he says he was finally induced to do so by the "quality" of the person who had asked to be enlightened. This remark, seeming a little fulsome, M. Arnauld in the next sentence explained that the piety and laudable desire to show gratitude to God evinced by the said person merited still more deference than her rank.

Fortunately, he continued, although there had fallen into the hands of his informant a writing designed to turn her from the road in which the Almighty had placed her, she had already received sufficient knowledge of religion to understand the evil of the communication. Furthermore, it was love of the Truth which then caused her to desire an elucidating response to the Jesuit's statements.

Thus there was some basis for the remark of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, these two ladies having been the fortuitous means at least of inducing the Grand Arnauld to write the book which had the effect of bringing the movement into notoriety, and, like the Translation of the New Testament sent Francis First through Marguérite d'Angoulême, of precipitating the ensuing war upon the heads of its leaders.

[1] Père Rapin analyses Molina's rules to have been three :

1. Ancient usage of the Church.
2. Counsel of a wise director.
3. The state and condition of affairs of each person (*Mémoires*, i. p. 29).

[2] "Plus on est dénué de Grâce, plus on doit hardiment s'approcher de Jésus Christ dans l'Eucharistie" (Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, ii. p. 167).

M. Arnauld's argument was to the effect that, while he did not think it wise to keep people away for any length of time from the Communion Table, he still saw no reason why those who felt the need of becoming spiritualized before approaching so sacred a Sacrament should not be allowed to defer its celebration until their penitential discipline was complete. On the other hand, he contended, the old method of fasting in sackcloth and ashes was unnecessary, it being quite possible to carry out one's penitence in the midst of the world. The power lay, after all, not in the Sacraments themselves, which had no efficacy to make better, but uniquely in the grace of God.

The body of the work goes into a detailed analysis and refutation of Molina's theories and reasonings, the arguments being based on decisive quotations from the Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers of the Church.[1]

In the opinion of critics, the *Book of the Frequent Communion* was not inspired: it was simply a workmanlike piece of logic, written with common sense and wisdom. Through its method it may have revolutionized theological literature, but it neither charmed by its phraseology, nor was it arresting in its eloquence. Yet in making clear St. Cyran's hitherto more or less hidden and obscure ideas on piety and penitence, these doctrines came as an "illuminating flash" into the world, especially as they were directed against the theology which makes everything pleasant and comfortable for the sinner. Speaking by the mouth of Arnauld, the Jansenists now strongly criticized casuistry, and, forbidding all purely earthly delights, condemned the easy adjustment of pleasure and penitence.

The Jesuits were, of course, tremendously incensed by so pronounced a criticism of their methods, and one of their number began to denounce the book before it was fairly in circulation. In these sermons, preached in the religious house of St. Louis, Père Nouet descended to personal invective against the Jansenists themselves, calling them

"fantastical, lunatical, melancholy scorpions, or serpents with three-pointed tongues."[2]

[1] Although Arnauld laid down the same rules for communion as Molina, he differed essentially in the matter of deferring the Sacrament until the completion of penitence.

[2] Père Quesnel, in his *Histoire Abrégée de la vie et des ouvrages de M. Arnauld*, p. 88, declares that Père Nouet declaimed in an "insolent" manner against

This was a singular demonstration, in view of the fact that some months previously Père Nouet had himself revised the Approbation of the Preface of Arnauld's work, which was written in Latin and signed by the Archbishop of Tours as well as sixteen Bishops and Archbishops, as well as by twenty doctors of the Sorbonne. Naturally, these latter resented the criticism against their Approbation, and at once appealed to Cardinal Mazarin for redress. Whereupon, assisted by four fathers of his Order, Père Nouet was compelled to appear in the Sorbonne, bareheaded and on his knees, to sign an act of disavowal of what he had said.[1]

But the temporary defeat of the Jesuits in the matter did not cause the excitement to subside. Thus the Crown was again called in to interfere, and when appealed to by the Jesuits in the crisis caused by the *Book of the Frequent Communion*, Mazarin and Anne of Austria, ruling the kingdom for the young Louis XIV, were induced to give an order that the author of the book appear at Rome to defend it before a tribunal of the Inquisition. In this expedition Arnauld was to have been accompanied by St. Cyran's nephew, M. de Barcos, who was responsible for certain parts of the book; but just as they were on the point of starting, the latter decided it would be dangerous to go. So without explanation he absented himself —or, in other words, fled into hiding. Arnauld, who had talked much about going to Rome to "defend the Truth," and of returning "gloriously,"[2] suddenly concluded that M. de Barcos had chosen the wiser course. So, after writing a beautiful letter of excuse to the Queen, he also fled, his refuge being the house of a M. Hamelin, an officer of the Crown, *Controlleur des Ponts et Chaussées*, who in order, as he said, "to more surely guard his treasure," left the quarter in which he was living at the time, and removed to the Faubourg Saint Marceau. M. de St. Cyran's nephew was sheltered by the Princesse de Guéméné, who no doubt thought, in thus giving asylum to one so near the saint who had just gone, that she had gained a greater prize than M. Hamelin.

the *Frequent Communion* in his sermons at St. Louis, even saying that the doctrine was worse than that of Luther or Calvin.

[1] *Histoire Abrégée de la vie et des ouvrages de M. Arnauld*, p. 88.

[2] Lancelot, *Mémoires*, p. 271.

As a boy, Martin de Barcos had studied at Louvain under Jansenius, who, while recognizing the solid qualities of his pupil's mind, found him somewhat heavy and slow, also rather quarrelsome. The allegation was later on brought forward by enemies that St. Cyran had induced Jansenius to take funds from his bishopric for the education of Martin de Barcos. In his Provincial Letters, Pascal nobly defended the dead saint from this charge, which doubtless had no foundation but that of malice. On leaving Louvain, De Barcos devoted himself uninterruptedly to St. Cyran, never quitting his side, but living and working with him continuously, probably editing the *Aurelius*, as well as other writings.[1]

Up to the time of the Frequent Communion, de Barcos had been universally venerated at Port-Royal. But now division crept in between him and Arnauld on points of doctrine and conduct. As Sainte-Beuve said of this learned descendant of St. Cyran :

" He had a somewhat annoying pen,"

and certainly by his writings De Barcos seemed to be continually stirring up theological strife.[2]

Although the first act in the drama of Port-Royal persecution and controversy may be called the publication of the *Augustinus* in 1640, the *Book of the Frequent Communion* was destined to create the excuse to the enemies of the Jansenists for a more personal attack on Port-Royal itself, and it marks the beginning of that era of persecution on the part of the enemies of the Jansenists, of evasion on the part of the persecuted, signalled by Arnauld's flight in 1644, which was now to continue almost unbrokenly to the end. It was this book, however, which earned for Antoine Arnauld the title of

[1] When St. Cyran died, his Abbey in Brenne was coveted on all sides, enemies contesting that it ought not to be given to a Jansenist. Yet in spite of opposition it was finally presented to De Barcos. On the new Abbé going to thank Anne of Austria for the gift, she exclaimed :

" Eh, what would M. d'Andilly have said if I had given it to another ? " (Pierre Thomas du Fossé, *Mémoires*, i. p. 130).

[2] Sainte-Beuve thus describes M. de Barcos: " He was of medium height, we are told, with refined physiognomy, a gravity and seriousness adapted to affright demons. . . ." (*Port-Royal*, ii. p. 222). According to Père Rapin, De Barcos's own opinion of Arnauld was that he had mind, but too much commerce with the world, even asserting that Arnauld was too dissipated and too much given to society (*Mémoires*, i. p. 35).

Champion of Jansenism. Accordingly, the modern unimpassioned verdict calls the book itself

"a temperate and just exposition of the faith of Jansenius and St. Cyran, unspoiled by quibbles of scholastic dispute." [1]

Its result—as first skirmish in the battle—may thus be considered a victory for the Jansenists, for by this second example of the Letter of their Law the disciples of Jansenius and St. Cyran really convinced the world at large not only of the sacredness of the Sacraments, but of the fact that a true Christian should not approach them lightly.[2]

[1] Strowski, *Pascal et son Temps*, i. p. 281.

[2] In 1686 Arnauld himself wrote: "Ce qui est certain, c'est que le plus célèbres prédicateurs, même Jésuites, se font honneur maintenant de louer en chaire le délai de l'absolution pour les péchés mortels d'habitude, . . . et qu'il n'y en a plus qui osent parler contre" (see *Œuvres*).

CHAPTER VIII

IMMEDIATE EFFECT OF THE "BOOK OF THE FREQUENT COMMUNION" ON PORT-ROYAL

"Il y a une justice des œuvres, il y a une justice de la grace; l'une vient de l'homme, l'autre vient de Dieu; l'une est terrestre et passagère, l'autre est divine et éternelle; l'une est l'ombre et le signe, l'autre est la lumière et la verité. L'une fait connaitre le péché pour fuir la mort, l'autre fait connaitre la grace pour acquérir la vie"

WHATEVER the literary merits or defects of the *Frequent Communion*, in itself it was epoch-making in more than Jansenist circles. Read not only by theologians, but by all classes of society, its immediate effect was inspiring. For, in making clear the letter of their belief, it threw into relief the beauty of the practice of the Spirit by the men who had voluntarily exiled themselves from the delights of the world. Others yearned to follow their precedent,[1] and among the many drawn to Port-Royal by the *Book of the Frequent Communion* there were, strangely enough, converts not only from the military and leisure classes, but that most valuable profession of all, medicine. As Mère Angélique wrote M. Hamon:[2]

"After the great gift of a perfect confessor, there is nothing more important than that of a truly Christian physician, who expresses in all his actions and words the holy maxims of Christianity."

The first Doctor of Medicine to be attracted to the Desert

[1] "Those who had offices, quitted them. Those who had benefices, renounced them. They despoiled themselves of everything, without reserving anything for the future; and what is very remarkable, they despoiled themselves thus to go into an asylum from which a blast of wind might chase them, leaving them thereafter no retreat" (Fontaine, *Mémoires*, i. p. 308).

[2] In August 1658.

by the Letter of the Jansenist Law was a certain M. Victor Pallu, Seigneur of Bréau in Touraine, and belonging to the Faculty of Medicine in Paris. A witness to the death of his distinguished patient, the Comte de Soissons, on the field of battle in 1641, Dr. Pallu had already resolved to reform his life, when his determination was strengthened by the sight of St. Cyran on his death-bed. Called in in his capacity of physician during the last seizure of the Abbé, M. Pallu stood by while for an hour after the Extreme Unction had been administered St. Cyran lay there in complete repose of body, employing his mind, which was as keen as ever, in thanking God for the graces shown him. At the expiration of the hour apoplexy again struck the patient, and soon afterward he expired. To the doctor, looking on, that respite seemed nothing short of miraculous,[1] and with this vision in his mind he too read the *Book of Frequent Communion,* and resolved to go down to the solitude of Port-Royal des Champs.[2]

On arriving at the monastery, Dr. Pallu said to Le Maitre that he wished to spend some five or six days there. With a smile Le Maitre replied to the effect that if it was not God who sent him, he would remain even less than the time which now seemed so lengthy, but that if he had been sent by the Lord he would stay longer.[3]

Le Maitre's words were prophetical, for Dr. Pallu never again left Port-Royal des Champs. Building a little dwelling within the garden of the Abbey, he ensconced himself therein, and at once began his excellent offices to the community by writing a treatise on the salutary qualities of the laugh, the pleasure of which he did not think it necessary on his conversion to deprive himself. It seems that at thirty-seven years of age he had come to dread what he called "the silence of God"—that is, the sweetness of life undisturbed by the severe tests of disappointment and sorrow. It was his hatred of sin, he

[1] "Dr. Pallu attributed this good interval he had had to a kind of miracle, asserting that it was a thing almost without example" (Lancelot, *Mémoires,* i. p. 249).

[2] "On n'a que soi-même à craindre dans la Solitude, au lieu que dans le monde, tout est à craindre" (Hamon, *Traité de la Solitude,* p. 59).

[3] See *Recueil de Plusieurs Pièces pour servir à l'Histoire de Port-Royal,* p. 189.

said, which compelled him to yield to the only privation of penitence which was difficult for him—the relinquishment of the companionship of dear friends.[1]

As assistant and aide-de-camp, Dr. Pallu had a certain M. Moreau, also a Doctor of Medicine from the Faculty of Paris, who, although by profession healer of bodily ills, was unable to cure his own spiritual disease. M. Moreau's stay at Port-Royal was but short, yet its remembrance must have haunted him, for several years afterwards he returned for a retreat of fifteen days, and while there, strange to say, Death came and fetched him away.

Among the scholars and members of the Sorbonne who were aroused to a keener sense of the science they were studying by their brother doctor's (Arnauld) book, was a gentleman from Poitou called M. Baudri de Saint-Gilles d'Asson, who on reading the *Frequent Communion* had already completed three years of his education at the Sorbonne. Renouncing the completion of his degree, this gentleman retired at once to Les Granges, where at the other end of the garden from *le Petit Pallu* he built a little house covered with thatch, which the Solitaires gaily called *Le Palais Saint-Gilles*. At first M. de St. Gilles wished to take up the joiner's trade, but he eventually drifted into that of farmer, and soon became the Solitaires' Agent in business affairs outside the monastery.[2] On his visits to the world beyond the convent gates he found it more convenient to wear a sword like other cavaliers,[3] and it was a joy to him to be in the thick of all kinds of plots and counter-plots, so much so that it was not long before his clever analytical mind might have been detected at the bottom of every pleasant *contretemps* that happened between the so-called Jansenists and the agents

[1] *Supplément au Nécrologe de l'Abbaie de Port-Royal des Champs.* Lettre de M. Pallu à un de ses amis sur sa Retraite à Port-Royal des Champs, p. 243. "Face le Mieux qui pourra," said M. Pallu, "pour moi je me contente de faire le Bien."

[2] Fontaine in his *Mémoires* (ii. pp. 352–355) speaks with great admiration of M. de Saint-Gilles: "He was a man fit for anything. . . . He was the consolation of M. Singlin through the journeys which he undertook; that of M. de Saci through his negotiations; that of his friends through his kind deeds; and if I dare say so, that of the angels through the penitence which he carried to extremes."

[3] Mémoire de M. de Pontchateau on M. St. Gilles d'Asson in the *Supplément au Nécrologe de Port-Royal*, pp. 68–71.

of the King. When active work was over, and he was back again in the monastery, his austerities were doubly severe. M. de Sainte-Marthe, giving in the *Nécrologe* a very fine account of this singular Solitaire's history, analysed his faults to have been on the outside—his heart being the purest part.

"His charity was like flaming gold, which rendered him rich in the eyes of God,"

says the Eulogist. Then, being a Friend of the Truth, the writer added:

"Walking in the dust, his feet at least were a bit covered with it." [1]

Du Fossé most graphically describes the arrival at Port-Royal of another gentleman from Poitou, M. de la Petitière, reputed to be the best swordsman in France:

"He was a lion rather than a man," said he; "fire issued from his eyes, and his glance alone frightened those who looked at him." [2]

God had aroused the soul of this man of war by a salutary fear. It seems that, having fought a duel with a kinsman of Richelieu, he killed his adversary, receiving at the same time a sword-thrust in his back, the point of the sword remaining there, too firmly embedded to be extracted with anything smaller than a smith's pincers. Fleeing to escape Richelieu's wrath, De la Petitière was seized with a horror of his crimes, and, having heard of M. de St. Cyran and the *Book of the Frequent Communion*, found a way to retire to Port-Royal des Champs, not definitely, however, until he had learned the trade of a shoemaker, living incognito for this purpose with a cobbler near by. During his apprenticeship he was in the habit of looking after the children of the vicinity, taking them to hear the services, and reading aloud to them the Scripture and the Lives of the Saints.

His apprenticeship over, his master was so pleased that he wished to keep his assistant permanently, offering La Petitière a good salary to remain, but the best swordsman in France preferred to retire to Port-Royal des Champs, where he contented himself with the humble task of making boots for the nuns. That he did so, is probably what

[1] P. 77. [2] *Mémoires*, p. 125.

induced the Jesuits, hearing of the labours of the Solitaires in all directions, and being jealous of their spirituality, to mock at them, calling them *Sabotiers*, asserting that to learn to make *sabots* one should go to Port-Royal. As a matter of fact, although the Solitaires were not too proud to undertake any kind of work, they did not make wooden shoes, the wood of the country not being adapted to their manufacture. Not long after the publication of the *Book of the Frequent Communion*, M. d'Andilly finally fulfilled the last wish of St. Cyran, and retired definitely from the world of which he was such an ornament. On going to take leave of the Queen-Mother, he begged her not to believe the story of the *Sabots*.

"If," he said, "your Majesty should hear that the Solitaires cultivate the growing of fruit on walls, it is true, and I shall hope to induce you to eat some of the product of their *espaliers*." [1]

Some people were malicious enough to say that it was unsatisfied ambition which drove Mère Angélique's brother into the arms of Port-Royal.[2] And certainly, although he had filled important positions at Court, being associated with the Intendant of Finances, Intendant General in the household of Gaston d'Orléans, and then called from his retirement at Pomponne, like Cincinnatus of old, to become Intendant to the Armies of the Rhine, Robert d'Andilly had greater certainty of shining at Port-Royal, where he could act as the chief of a powerful party. Unquestionably he had a touch of worldliness in his character, which caused him to wish to shine even in religious circles, yet he too believed most firmly in the necessity of the action of Divine Grace.

Yet speaking of his friend, St. Cyran had said :

"It is true he has not the virtue of an anchorite or of a saint, but I know no man of his condition so solidly virtuous." [3]

And he too must have experienced conversion on entering Port-Royal, for he acknowledged that it was

[1] Du Fosse, *Mémoires*, i. pp. 131–134.

[2] Biographical Notice preceding the Michaud and Poujoulat edition of *Mémoires d'Andilly*.

[3] Lettre du Fevrier, 1642.

grace and not human persuasion which touches the heart of sinners.[1]

The story is told that one day in M. d'Andilly's presence somebody, apropos of the *Frequent Communion*, expressed surprise that a young man like Antoine Arnauld, then thirty-two, who had hardly left the schools and with no knowledge of the world, could have written so well and so gracefully. M. d'Andilly replied that there was no occasion for astonishment, his brother having

" simply spoken the language of his house."

This remark was greatly a matter of family loyalty, for at the bottom M. d'Andilly was at the antipodes from the youngest Arnauld both in literature and the letter of his religion. In literature he belonged to the style of the previous century, which was essentially polite and polished, grandiloquent and panegyrical, while Antoine went to the extreme of directness and accuracy. The two differed also in a feeling of delicacy. M. d'Andilly having made promises to the Court for himself and others, was outraged that Antoine would not keep them, and disliking publicity, Antoine on the contrary wished all the world to hear his criticisms and declarations of faith. Some rather hard words passed between the brothers in this connection.

M. d'Andilly's " Pères des Déserts "—a translation of the lives by different authors of the various hermits and solitaires of the Thébaïde of Syria—written shortly after entering Port-Royal, furnishes the writer's true criticism of his brother's work, and while revising and correcting the formidable qualities of the *Book of the Frequent Communion*, it also aided its effect from the standpoint of gentleness and edification. Instead of using dogma to enforce his ideas of the utility of penitence and religion, M. d'Andilly tried to convince by citation of example and persuasion. He was not a profound theologian like Arnauld, but his style, by its charm and simplicity, probably appealed to quite as many hearts as did the sterner rigorism of his younger brother.

Fifty-seven years of age when he retired to Port-Royal, for twenty-eight years M. d'Andilly's personality lent a glamour of elegance and politeness to the aridity and barren-

[1] Lettre à une Religieuse, 15 Mai 1640.

ROBERT ARNAULD D'ANDILLY

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY JACQUES LUBIN

ness of the Desert. With all his accustomed enthusiasm he threw himself into the life of the Solitaires, in which he was even the means of interesting such men of letters as Gomberville, Chapelain, etc. Yet he did not confine himself to literary and devotional pursuits, he was also of practical benefit, and it was mainly through his efforts that the "vallon affreux" was eventually turned into a Thébaïde, for with an excess of enthusiasm which reacted to the financial detriment of his heir, the Abbé Arnauld, he used his own fortune toward the transforming of the pestilential marsh of the valley Yvette into a well-drained land. On his retirement this generous Solitaire had given his eldest son only enough money to keep him for a twelvemonth. The son, realizing his father's peculiarities, fortunately took his own loss of patrimony philosophically, saying :

"His more than liberal humour did not quit him in the Desert ; he had need of all that he had left to satisfy it, and it was for me to retrench." [1]

In his later years, gardening being his special joy, Jansenism as translated by M. d'Andilly, was but one long pastoral idyll. Most of his time was spent out of doors, and here again his hobby was turned to both practical and ambitious uses. Soon becoming famed for the monster fruits he grew—"*fruits bénits*," Mazarin called them—we read of his sending specimens of his art and labour to the Court, and of distinguished members thereof paying him visits in return.

That the whole Court held him in consideration is shown by the fact that when Cardinal Richelieu was thinking of having St. Cyran arrested, and after the resolution to do so had been made between him, Père Joseph, and M. Desnoyers, they could not help saying among themselves :

"But what will M. d'Andilly say ?" [2]

His credit with the Queen-Mother was well-known. In addition to a naturally pious inclination proceeding from her education under the Spanish Jesuits, Anne of Austria had been forced into a more serious consideration of the things of the other world, through Richelieu's animosity and the consequent

[1] L'Abbé Arnauld, *Mémoires* (Petitot), p. 221.
[2] Lancelot, *Mémoires*, i. p. 90.

ill-will of Louis XIII. Thus in the crisis of her own peril, when suspected by Richelieu of treason to France in the matter of Spain, she had retired to a convent, and herself transferred the famous ninth century monastery of Val de Grace to the Rue St. Jacques, not far from Port-Royal de Paris and the Carmélites. In 1645 the first stone of the imposing church of the new Val de Grace was just being laid. Therefore, in the Jansenist quarrel just beginning, it was not strange that Anne of Austria should have been heated against those accused of infidelity to the power she had been taught all her life to venerate, the Papacy. "Fie! Fie! the Grace!" she said in contemptuous tones. On his part Cardinal Mazarin expressed it openly as his opinion that the very women who were making such an ado about the whole matter understood no more of it than he did![1]

But whatever they thought of the other Messieurs and the doctrines of Port-Royal in general, both Anne of Austria and Mazarin always had the utmost respect and friendship for M. d'Andilly. His memory restrained them in many things they might have done.

"The Queen," said Mazarin, "is admirable in the affairs of the Jansenists. When one speaks in general, she wishes they might all be exterminated, but when it is proposed to her to ruin several, and that one must begin with M. d'Andilly, she at once exclaims that they are too fine people, and too good subjects of the King."[2]

[1] Madame de Motteville, *Mémoires*.

[2] Gerberon, *Histoire du Jansénisme*, tome ii. p. 377.

CHAPTER IX

THE PETITES ÉCOLES OF PORT-ROYAL

I. History, Masters, and Methods

> " Sans l'utile secours de l'éducation,
> C'est en vain que l'éclat d'une haute puissance
> Est jointe à plus d'un million."
>
> Pannard

IN Savoy, on the borders of France and Italy, where the Alps seem to reach up almost to the sky, lies the old town of Annecy. Here, during the year 1603, on fête days and Sundays, the Savoyards grew accustomed to seeing a young man dressed in a cassock going about the streets sounding a bell and crying :

> " A la doctrine Chrestienne, à la doctrine Chrestienne !
> On vous enseignera le chemin de Paradis ! "

Round the herald's neck was a placard bearing the words " Jesus " and " Marie " written in letters of gold, and the enticing invitation came from St. François de Sales, Bishop of Geneva, resident at Annecy, who, with the idea of educating the people of his diocese in the Church catechism, began by teaching the children the principles of the faith.

An hour after the herald had thus poetically announced the class the holy Bishop would mount into his pulpit, and there, raised a few feet above them, expound to his little audience the grave questions of Church doctrine " familiarly," as his biographer tells us, himself becoming a child again.[1]

The theology of Jansenius and St. Cyran gave them a peculiar outlook on education. It was a stern and uncompromising doctrine indeed that could, in an inexorable carrying out of the strictest dogmas of the faith, condemn to eternal

[1] Louis de la Rivière, *Vie de St. François de Sales*, p. 442.

damnation innocent infants dying without baptism. Other parties in the Church ignored the letter of this law, but not so Cornelius Janssen. He held to it, as to other ancient principles, with the tenacity of the unflinching moralist he was. Yet neither of the two men had been oblivious of the fact that if their theories of reform were to be permanent in influence they must be imprinted on the pliant mind of the young.

Thus, one of the most characteristic developments of the whole system of Jansenism was its training of youth, and the Petites Écoles were founded with the desire, not so much of gaining Heaven, as of avoiding Hell. They were peculiarly the creation of St. Cyran,[1] whose aim was to keep these little ones in the state of innocence and holiness in which Baptism had placed them.

Before his imprisonment the Abbé had himself begun the work of teaching by the education of two nephews of his own, with whom he associated Jerome and Thierry Bignon, sons of the Advocate-General of France, afterward adding to these pupils two other boys. With the recluses also, almost from the moment of their retirement at Port-Royal de Paris, the pedagogic element had always been present, and Lancelot tells us that at that early time there had been a few pupils both within and without the monastery. In the progress of these young people, and especially the outside class, St Cyran naturally took a great interest, but again, unlike St François, there was no tenderness in his treatment of them. For him the word "Charity" did not spell love, but stern, implacable duty. Moreover, albeit sincerely fond of children, he could not, in justice to the tenets of his faith, think otherwise than his friend.

"The Devil," he said, "goes the rounds without, attacking children. They do not fight him, so one must combat him for them."

Thus he was ever intent on the terrible task of defeating Nature in its effort to corrupt their innocence.

[1] In a letter to M. de Rebours from Vincennes (*Nécrologe*, ii. p. 46), St. Cyran exclaimed: "I wish you could read in my heart the affection I bear, children. . . . I had made the design of building a house which would have been like a seminary for the Church, in order to preserve there the innocence of children, without which I realize better every day that it is difficult for them to become good priests (clercs). . . . This design was ruined by my imprisonment."

As early as 1643 we read of three young Du Fossés, together with an Arnauld d'Andilly called Villeneuve, and two Bignons, being sent under the guidance of Singlin down to Port-Royal des Champs. Pierre Thomas du Fossé, who followed the vicissitudes of the schools throughout their troubled and migratory history, describes the feelings of himself and his comrades in seeing the Desert.[1] The sight of the old monastery, situated in a wild spot with mountains nearly falling on its head, its pond stagnant, its gardens covered with rubbish, full of weeds, the ruined buildings teeming with vipers, filled the lads with loneliness and despair.

During the year of their stay at Port-Royal des Champs this loneliness was much mitigated by the delight of frequent walks with Le Maitre and Séricourt, whom they adored. But the really bright side of the picture of the life of these boys in the Desert brings us back to the fine old Abbey Church, from which the white habits and quiet presence of the gentle nuns had so long been absent. On Sundays and fête days Mass was said here in all formality, and De Selles, a clever preceptor in every way, but especially skilled in music, led his pupils in the chanting of the Canticles. Their religious instructor was M. de Bascle, the text-book of devotion, St. Cyran's *Théologie Familière*, written at the request of M. Bignon for his two sons. At this time the precepts the tutors wished most to instil into their pupils' minds were :

"The fear of God, the shunning of sin, and a very great horror of lying."

But theological questions, such as free-will, predestination, etc., were never less discussed than in their midst.[2]

Still the boys were not sorry when the storm following the appearance of the *Book of the Frequent Communion* caused them to be sent to Chesnai, a little village only a quarter of a league from Versailles, whence after six months they returned to Port Royal des Champs. It had now become evident, however, that no real education could be given under such desultory conditions. To promote genuine zeal and enthusiasm for study, both consecutive regular work and emulation were essential, so as the nuns were now thinking of returning to Port-Royal des Champs, and the atmosphere of Paris for the time less

[1] *Mémoires*, i. pp. 60–61. [2] Du Fosse, *Mémoires*, i. p. 100.

inimical, in 1648 the pupils were transferred to Paris. On removal there, the schools were inaugurated in a large and commodious mansion situated in the Rue Cul de Sac St. Dominique de l'Enfer in the St. Jacques quarter. Formerly the property of M. Lambert, brother-in-law of M. Arnauld's host during the storm of the *Frequent Communion*, this house had a large court, as well as a spacious and delightful garden. Four roomy chambers were made into class-rooms, and one master with his six pupils installed in each. And with this translation to the great city, three years after the death of their originator, the history of the Petites Écoles really begins. Then they were first organized, and received a distinct character of their own.

The first and most important matter was to find instructors who combined capacity, discretion and disinterestedness with godliness. In a letter to M. de Rebours from Vincennes, St. Cyran had given definite expression to his belief that as children needed constant supervision, no one preceptor should have more than six pupils under his charge. Strange to say, this same theory had previously been advocated by no less a person than Erasmus in his *Traité sur le Mariage Chrétien* :

" Thus," he said, " one procures a life in common at an age when gaiety and pleasure are quite proper, and at the same time the attention of the preceptor may rest on each individual child. In short, one easily avoids the corruption born of too large a number."

This fact was borne in mind in arranging class rooms, etc., and the four teachers who first took up the charge—Lancelot, Nicole, Guyot, and Coustel, with M. Walon de Beaupuis at their head, were striking examples of homely piety and holiness. They were preceptors rather than professors ; and in their intercourse with these young spirits there was no familiarity, for in the child they honoured

" innocence and the Holy Spirit which dwelt therein."

Indeed there might have been written over the door of this house the motto :

" Vigilance, respect for childhood, parental tenderness." [1]

[1] Du Fossé, *Mémoires*, i. p. 165.

No preceptor was ever more honoured and loved than the Director of the schools, M. Walon de Beaupuis; and if on their part the pupils adored their master, he reciprocated their affection by a lifelong devotion. On the destruction of the Petites Écoles, M. de Beaupuis was for some time associated with Pascal in Paris, where he helped to educate the latter's nephews, and was active in efforts to alleviate the persecutions of the nuns. Being ordained priest six years afterward, he went back to his native town of Beauvais, where, serving for ten years in the Church, he become at last Superior of the Seminary, where he in turn was followed by the hatred of enemies of the Jansenists, losing his position, and being obliged to retire quietly to his sister's house in Beauvais. Here he lived twenty-nine years longer, carrying out as best he might the austerities and habits of his early retreat at Port-Royal des Champs.[1] It was his custom to rise every day at four o'clock, when he spent many hours in work on the Fathers or the Apostles of the Church. When reading he always stood at a high desk, sitting down only to write. His room was never heated, even in the coldest winters, and the only recreation he ever allowed himself was a short visit each summer to Port-Royal des Champs, there to renew the good influences he had originally imbibed. Until the latter part of his life, he made this journey on foot and fasting. He died at the age of eighty-seven, the very year of the destruction of Port-Royal (1709).

The salient quality of Claude Lancelot, an ideal pedagogue, was simplicity. He possessed, moreover, says M. Jules Lemaitre,[2] two gifts of the spirit: tears and laughter. Unfortunately, Lancelot lacked altogether the qualities of leadership. His was naturally always the second, never the first place. Posterity is grateful to him for the writing of memoirs which depict especially the life and character of M. de St. Cyran, his admiration and model in all things. To Lancelot, St. Cyran divulged most fully his ideas on education, and it was Lancelot's mind too which ably and surely worked out those methods of study which have made the permanent fame of the Petites Écoles. Although assisted by Nicole, De

[1] *Supplement au Nécrologe*, pp. 365–388. Nicole said that the life of M. de Beaupuis was in itself a kind of miracle.

[2] *Jean Racine*, p. 15.

Saci, Arnauld, and even Pascal, to him were due in reality the series of text-books called *Les Méthodes de Port-Royal*, not printed for the most part until after the destruction of the schools, but practically worked and tested throughout the fifteen years of their existence. These methods consisted in Latin, Greek, Italian, and Spanish Grammars.

Opinions differ much with regard to Pierre Nicole, who, called in soon after the foundation of the schools to assist Lancelot, was so much admired by Madame de Sévigné that to her daughter she spoke of him as " tout divin," and declared that she wished she could make a bouillon of one of his Moral Essays and swallow it! The historian Louis Veuillot calls him " the coldest, greyest, heaviest, and most insupportable of all the bores of a boring community." Yet, if his books were dull, Nicole himself was one of the most peculiar and interesting of the Port-Royalists. A prodigy in Greek and Latin, at the age of fourteen Nicole had been able to explain the great writers of both languages. Sent to Paris for a course in philosophy, he made acquaintance with the Solitaires, who, when the Petites Écoles were started, gave him the class from which issued Angran, Tillemont, and finally Racine himself. That Nicole was the master of the great poet, constitutes, said Mersan,[1] his best claim to the remembrance of posterity.

Nicole's manner of teaching his pupils the Humanities was first to familiarize them with Quintilian, Cicero, Virgil, and the *Art Poétique* of Horace, pointing out passages particularly capable of forming the mind and fixing the attention, after which he would impress upon them the first rules for the Art of Thinking. In all cases, Nicole's pupils were free to ask questions and inaugurate discussion, and his simple methods of teaching were perfectly in accord with the principles of the Petites Écoles in general.

Of Guyot, little is known; and, as he is not noticed in the *Nécrologe*, we conclude that this fourth master of the Petites Écoles was in reality one of those weak souls who did not persevere—nay, even worse—that he went over to the stronger side. For in 1666, in an inscription of one of his books, *Epitré dédicatoire au Comte de Montaubon*, he seems to have

[1] Introduction to *Pensées de Nicole*, p. 16.

eulogized the rival college of Claremont (now Lycée Louis le Grand) as

"that celebrated school which piety dedicated to science and virtue!" [1]

After leaving Port-Royal, Guyot was attached to the University at Paris, and had relations with many distinguished people. He died thirty-two years later.

Coustel, on the contrary, was of a faithful and truly pious nature, his countryman M. de Beaupuis being his model. His life was spent in the quiet paths of the scholar and Christian, his *Règles de l'éducation des Enfants*, written after the destruction of the Écoles, being his only step into publicity. Otherwise, his light was hidden in the silence of the unobtrusive.

Besides these masters, in the early days there was also a M. le Feure, whom Du Fossé extols as

"gentle, honest, of a noble nature, and much elevated above the common." [2]

This man, of rounded powers, was a good humanist, a clever philosopher, a learned theologian, and accomplished as an historian. Also conversant with astronomy, he knew something of medicine from the botanical point of view.

A renowned associate of *Ces Messieurs*, and one of the best teachers of the Petites Écoles, was the memoirist, Nicolas Fontaine. Losing his father, a writing-master of Paris, when he was very young, the boy was brought up by the Curé of St. Merry, who finally took him, a youth of nineteen, to Port-Royal des Champs, where, joining the Solitaires, he at once showed himself their humble friend, always ready to do their bidding in merging his own individuality. Becoming a tutor at the schools, he in his turn was directed by De Saci, who impregnated the younger man with his own peculiar theories with regard to education, saying to his disciple that if he (De Saci) were free to dispose of his time, he would gladly become the principal director of

"these little souls, in whom it is sometimes more necessary to combat the enemy than in the largest.' [3]

[1] *Magazin Encyclopédique*, Aug. 1813, "Guyot et ses Œuvres," Barbier.
[2] *Mémoires*, i. p. 167.
[3] Fontaine, *Mémoires*, ii. p. 55.

According to his own account, Fontaine taught Cicero and Virgil.

The later history of this, De Saci's devoted friend and fellow-prisoner of the Bastille, reminds one of the Solitaires' universal custom, due both to modesty and prudence, of disguising their identity under fictitious names. On becoming the secretary of De Saci, Fontaine not only loses his individuality in that of his greater master, but disappears entirely under a variety of cognomens. Neither a very good theologian nor a skilled Hellenist, his *Mémoires* are a most valuable contribution to the history of Port-Royal. In his day, they were not so appreciated as they are now. They were then considered to have "neither order, chronology, nor continued narration." Sainte-Beuve's judgment, on the contrary, classes them very high.

"Fontaine," he says, "tells us more in a few pages than Racine in the whole of his elegant *Abrégé*. . . . The sentiment of these solitary lives breathes in them; we hear Pascal and de Saci talk, we see d'Andilly smilingly rise and come toward us the length of his *espaliers* in bloom." [1]

The ideal of the system of training to be pursued at the Petites Écoles was threefold. The first design was expressed by an article written by M. de Sainte-Marthe in the *Nécrologe* of Port-Royal, wherein the primary object in the establishing was expressly stated to be the raising of young people in the fear of God. Pointing out the dangers to which in other colleges and schools youth is subject, M. de Sainte-Marthe goes on to lament the fact that, seeing this menace, no one was striving to prevent it, there being nothing in the world in which people seemed so little interested as man's perdition.[2]

The second ideal brings us to the purely literary side of the movement. This had for its foundation a very great, if hidden, ambition: that of polishing and humanizing men of letters.[3]

The third ideal was the production not merely of scientists and grammarians, but men!

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iii. pp. 468–588.

[2] *Nécrologe de l'Abbaie de Port-Royal des Champs*, ii. p. 48.

[3] Hallam says (*Literature of Europe*, ii. p. 273): "Before the Jansenists, the Jesuits had long been conspicuously the classical scholars of France. In their colleges, the purest and most elegant Latinity was supposed to be found. The Jansenists appeared ready at one time to wrest this palm from their inveterate foes."

In the Petites Ecoles, reform in teaching was logically begun with primary education, and initiated in that first step in the acquirement of knowledge, the alphabet. Seeing little children knitting their brows and biting their lips in their efforts to spell, Pascal set his great mind to thinking out a way to help them in their difficulties. That he succeeded in the opinion of Port-Royal, is shown by the fact that at a crisis in his history Arnauld himself—on the very day, indeed, after the Sorbonne had pronounced its last sentence against him, and he had fled into hiding—wrote to his niece, Mère Angélique de St. Jean :

" You will smile at what gives me occasion to write you. There is a little boy here of about twelve years who cannot read. I would like to try if he might not learn by M. Pascal's method. This is why I beg you to finish what you have already begun, and put it in writing, and send it to us." [1]

Pascal's method was very similar to the phonetic system used to-day, and consisted in a combination of consonants with vowels and diphthongs, avoiding harsh and difficult sounds in spelling.

Once having settled this initial difficulty, the next advance was made by teaching children to read, not as formerly in Latin, which took two or three years, but in their own tongue. They were then given good French translations of the best classical authors, prepared by *Ces Messieurs*, who at the same time took care to expurgate anything that might corrupt the innocence of youth. Thus, the pupils not only learned to be familiar with subjects of which they were later to read more in their Latin books, but also to themselves speak correctly.

After this grounding in their own, the study of other languages was the next step in their evolution, and here too French was used for rules and explanations—an innovation in the method of education of that day. The text-books excelled in lucidity, good arrangement, and erudition, and for the first time the so-called " natural " method of study was introduced [2] on the lines of modern inductive method.

[1] Letter of Jan. 31, 1656.

[2] The following eulogy was paid the *Methods* of Port-Royal by Barbier, an otherwise anti-Jansenist writer : " Up to to-day enough emphasis has not been put on the services rendered to the French language and to public instruction by the establishment of the Petites Écoles of Port-Royal . . . it is to the mode of teaching followed in these schools that we owe methods in

Although Lancelot's Latin Grammar was alleged to have eclipsed every previous work of the kind, his Greek Grammar was, according to competent critics, even finer, and by some considered the best work of its author. Lancelot was also in a measure responsible for a more important book than either the Greek or Latin Grammar. This was the "General Grammar," an outcome of talks with Arnauld on the subject of the formation of the art of speaking. Struck with the learned Doctor's reasoning, Lancelot induced him to dictate the matter during his leisure hours.

The General Grammar leads naturally up to the *Logic*, the most celebrated of the Port-Royal pedagogic attempts, and that which has, perhaps, the greatest value to-day.[1] When they came to write the *Logic, or the Art of Thinking*, *Ces Messieurs* undoubtedly sought the advice of Pascal; and not only were his reflections on the geometrical method used, but his *Art de Persuader*, founded on

"the knowledge of all that passes in the innermost parts of man, and which he scarcely ever knows"

was added.

The real foundation of the *Logic* was Descartes' *Discours de la Méthode*; and, divided into four parts, it considers the operations of the mind under the four aspects of conception, judgment, reasoning, and ordination. Following Descartes, it tries to prove that all ideas do not come from the senses, but that there are some absolutely independent of any images.

In this book the ambition of *Ces Messieurs* took a great leap, and aimed at accomplishing no less a task than that of forming men! In later years, Jean Jacques Rousseau, the most famous of educators, expressed the same object:

"Whether one destines my pupil for the sword, the Church, or the Bar, it matters little. . . . Nature calls him to human life; to live is the trade that I wish to teach him. In leaving my hands, he will not be, I acknowledge, either magistrate, soldier or priest; primarily, he will be a man." [2]

the study of the languages of Greek and Latin which to-day hold the first rank among productions of this kind" (*Magazin Encyclopédique*, Aug. 1813).

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iii. p. 542. [2] *Émile*, i. p. 11.

CHAPTER X

THE PETITES ÉCOLES OF PORT-ROYAL

II. End, Results, and Pupils

"Rien n'est plus difficile que de se proportionner à l'esprit des enfants; et c'est avec raison que Montaigne a dit que c'est l'effet d'une âme forte et bien elevée de se pouvoir accommoder à ces allures puériles."

Nicole, *Pensées*

BY this time their innovations in the method of study had become noised abroad, and their success—notably the fact that Lancelot's Latin method, dedicated to the King, was used in Louis XIV's education—made many enemies for the pedants of Port-Royal. These enemies, who, as a writer in the *Nécrologe* naïvely said, always wished to be the only ones to do good,[1] now plotted their ruin and extinction, and in 1648 a visit was made to the Rue St. Dominique de l'Enfer by the Lieutenant Civil to spy out the ground. Fortunately, he found nothing suspicious, but, shortly after the beginning of the Fronde, Paris being thought untenable, Le Feure's class was taken to the town of Magny, near Port-Royal des Champs, where the pious curé of the place, M. Retard, aided in the teaching. Here they stayed six months, until the death of Le Feure, when they removed to Les Granges.

The next occurrence to disturb work in the schools was the Second War of the Fronde, which necessitated various changes of domicile, and brought joy to the souls of the lads who were young enough to enjoy the excitement surrounding them. Du Fossé describes in a lively manner the quartering of a regiment of cavalry at Les Granges, and the devastation the soldiers wrought in that quiet place, which they left more like a stable than a Christian retreat.[2]

[1] *Supplément au Nécrologe*, p. 61.

[2] *Mémoires*, i. p. 224.

Indeed, from the time of leaving their Paris home, the schools were a divided institution, obliged to take root wherever they could. Interrupted, hounded, persecuted on all sides, their only flourishing and stationary period had been the short four years at the Rue St. Dominique. Besides the principal branches at Les Granges and Chesnai, there were several allied institutions at Trous, near Chevreuse, and at Sevrans, near Livry, the masters in each case being of the same stamp as the early ones, education proceeding under the Port-Royal ideals.

Finally, the King's mind having become completely bisased by the false and garbled reports of the association of many dangerous persons together in these schools, he was induced to issue an order commanding their dispersion. Before this could be put into execution, however, an untoward event happened which delayed the ruin for two years. As this accident—most mortifying for the enemies of the Jansenists in causing the death, at the College of Clermont, of no other than the nephew of Mazarin, Alphonse Mancini—was due solely to carelessness, the Jesuits were obliged, until the effect should have been somewhat forgotten, to cease their active campaign against the Petites Écoles. It was not until two years later the blow fell, and that the Lieutenant Civil appearing at Chesnai, dispersed the last of the pupils.

To determine the practical success of the Petites Écoles, we must examine the product of this education: the students themselves, who, after all, together with the Solitaires, make up the "real" Port-Royal. These may, in general, be divided into three classes:

First, those desultory ones, who seem almost to have drifted into the institution by chance, and whose real history touched very slightly on the later destiny of Port-Royal.

Secondly, sons of the true friends and benefactors of the monastery, and put into the schools out of a sincere emotion and enthusiasm on the part of the parents.

Thirdly, pupils who in themselves allied by spirit and independent impulse, best embody the results of the teaching.[1]

Among the sensational stories current concerning the illustrious men who at one time or another visited Port-Royal's

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iii. pp. 468–588.

pépinière (nursery), as the Petites Écoles have been called, two stand out. One is that the Duke of Monmouth, natural son of Charles II, stayed for some time at Chesnai under M. de Beaupuis. He is said to have been brought to France at the age of nine, and to have remained there two years, either at the Académie de Juilly or at Chesnai.

The other story concerns another titled Englishman, M. Stuart d'Aubigny, son of the Duke of Lennox and Richmond. This young aristocrat was early taken to France, and placed in the Petites Écoles. On leaving the schools, his career was full of incident. He became Canon of Notre-Dame, and on the restoration of Charles II was made Grand Almoner to the Queen of England. In the life of the Court and the thick of important political affairs, he must have forgotten to a great extent his early schooldays. In 1665, this man, whom Sainte-Beuve depicts as the type of the amiable gentleman of the seventeenth century, died at the moment he was about to realize his life's ambition. For even as the courier of the Pope was ringing at his door to bring him a Cardinal's hat, he breathed his last sigh.

In the same category with these aristocratic offshoots of Port-Royal, were Lancelot's later pupils, the young Duc de Chevreuse and the two Princes de Conti.

The roll of pupils of the second class begins with the name of Bignon, and this family was connected with Port-Royal by ties of worldly alliance and relationship, as opposed to the Arnaulds, its "core and stem." Both Bignon boys had distinguished careers, Jérôme succeeding his father as Advocate-General of France, Thierry occupying a no less important position in the State: that of First President of the *Grand Conseil.* Neither ever betrayed the principles of his education, remaining faithful to Port-Royal to the end.

In the train of these lads followed a number of pupils, who also became known in the service of the Law and the State. To this second class too belonged the Périers, Pascal's relations, Étienne, his nephew, being among the pupils sent to Chesnai, and a member of the so-called "Fourth Chamber," composed of all the best pupils, Racine among the number.

M. Gentien Thomas du Fossé, head of the pious family of Rouen, which eventually came in a body under the influence

of St. Cyran and the other messieurs, had primarily gone to Paris to see St. Cyran to complain of the conversion of the Curé of his parish, entailing the loss of his spiritual guide, and thus disturbing and angering him. On meeting the Abbé, then just out of prison, M. Thomas was completely won over:

"I thought I had come, sir," he said, "for my Curé, but I find it is for myself and my own salvation." [1]

Returning to his home, this *Maitre des Comptes* at once made an inventory of the goods he considered not legitimately acquired, and of which he determined to dispossess himself, after which, devoting his own existence to charity and goodness, he sent three daughters and three sons to Port-Royal to be educated. Pierre Thomas du Fossé, youngest of the sons, was too modest to think of becoming a priest, so he remained in the schools until their dispersion, after which, as layman and scholar, he followed in the train of the Solitaires, aiding them with his friendship and sympathy, and sharing with them their exile and evil fortunes.

The history of Villeneuve, the younger son of Robert d'Andilly, called the "Petit Jules," and one of Du Fossé's greatest comrades in the Rue Cul de Sac St. Dominique, from whom for ten long years he was inseparable, is rather pathetic. *Le Petit Jules* was very clever, especially in genealogy and heraldry, being also perfect in geography and history. Unfortunately, obstinate like the rest of his race, this Arnauld took it into his head that he must go into the army. And so, just before the destruction of the schools, without regard to the wishes of his father, or to his very unsatisfactory quality of short-sightedness, which incapacitated him for leading soldiers, he put his idea into execution, and was killed in his first campaign. Some writers accuse his father, in permitting this step, of having been his executioner. In reality, finding his son bent on the project, M. d'Andilly probably agreed, solely with the idea of stifling the lad's military taste by its very indulgence. Had he lived, Villeneuve would undoubtedly have returned to the piety taught him in the Petites Écoles, and thus swelled the list of the faithful Arnaulds.

[1] Du Fossé, *Mémoires*, i. p. 45.

Another comrade of Du Fossé was called Des Champs. In the memoirist's own words :

" As our class was composed of the most advanced students, we sent our challenges of emulation to each other. It was M. Des Champs, a gentleman of the country of Caux, who particularly excelled in this kind of combat, having a lively and piquant mind, and a very fine poetical sense." [1]

Coming now to the third class, we find foremost among all the serious pupils, Sebastien Le Nain de Tillemont, called the type of the perfect pupil. His father, a *Maitre des Requêtes*, was the intimate friend of M. de Bernières, and at the time of the Fronde it was these two officials who issued from the Palais de Justice in their robes of office to protect the nuns of Port-Royal de Paris as they passed from the St. Jacques Quarter to the Rue St. André des Arcs.

Tillemont was born at Paris in 1637, and at nine years of age entered the Petites Écoles. From the first, history was the study which most delighted him. Nicole, his master in logic, was much embarrassed by the questions of this pupil. At first he tried to answer in two words as he would any other, but finding that that would not do, he confessed that he never saw Tillemont approach without trembling to think that he might not be able to satisfy the boy's desire for knowledge. Later on, by a singular irony of fate, when Nicole himself was engaged in a difficult controversy, it was Tillemont who came to the assistance of his former master with data and arguments.

From the beginning, Tillemont found his particular vocation, and never left it. As he said one day to Marguérite Périer, Pascal's niece, from the age of fourteen he had neither read not studied anything, except as recreation, but what had relation to ecclesiastical history. His whole life was devotion to study to study's sake, and to religion.[2] He never left the straight but narrow path, and becoming a priest at the age of forty, obliged after two years to leave the little house he

[1] *Mémoires*, i. p. 56.

[2] " In your country house you were like a town situated on a mountain, like a lamp elevated on a chandelier, like a voice which cried from thence that each one remain in his place, and that no one goes from his place through impatience," said Fontaine of him (*Mémoires*, ii. p. 70).

had built within the walls of Port-Royal des Champs just in front of the church, he retired to his estate of Tillemont, where he remained till his death.

All his days were alike, the only bright gleam being his love for church music, which he not only understood perfectly, but himself composed. Loving children, their cries in the church did not shock him. On the contrary, he believed their presence sanctified the holy place. At Port-Royal, he loved to walk about the country, baton in hand, and if on the road between Chevreuse and Port-Royal he met children, he never failed to stop and talk to them. Encountering shepherds or cowherds with their cattle, he spoke to them of their souls.

"The soul," he explained, "is more excellent than the sun, in fact the most beautiful thing in the world. But," he continued, thinking to inspire in these ignorant men a horror of evil, "sin so disfigures the soul as to render it more deformed than the most terrible beasts." [1]

The last words of Tillemont were in eulogy of one of his fellow-pupils at the Petites Écoles, and of the education there received. In his will, he expressed the lively desire to be buried beside the son of M. de Bernières,

"with whom," he said, "God had united me, taking me from the house of my father to give me an education for which I shall bless Him in all eternity. . . . *having been raised by persons without ambition, who loved to serve God in spirit and in truth, in silence and in retreat.*" [2]

The death-warrant of the Petites Écoles had already been signed when in 1655 their real glory came to them in the person of a pupil of fifteen destined to be one of the greatest ornaments of France. This was Jean Racine, the author of *Athalie*. In him the schools of Port-Royal had their climax; he was their swan-song, their triumphal chant, and the pain of annihilation was forgotten in having given birth to such a poet. Other pupils like Tillemont, Angran, Du Fossé, Fontaine, were men to be proud of, but none could equal the

[1] Tronchay, *Vie de Le Nain de Tillemont*, p. 69.

[2] Tillemont was honoured by two epitaphs at Port-Royal. One was placed on his tomb in the church; the other before the *grille* in the nuns' choir (see *Nécrologe*, ii. p. 301).

distinction of Racine, none so fully responds to the principles of their influence and teaching.[1]

Coming to them at the moment when all seemed to be over, he had yet belonged to Port-Royal even before his birth, for his father and mother were still under the influence which the holy Solitaires had cast over La Ferté Milon when Jean Racine was born. The youth of the great poet was thus entirely surrounded and enveloped by the spirit of Port-Royal.[2]

When the boy was fifteen, by special favour the rules of the Petites Écoles, which stipulated that no children over ten years of age should be accepted, were broken in his favour, and Les Granges became his home. Here another turn of fortune awaited him, for at the time of his arrival at the farm above the monastery, the King's order for the dispersion of the pupils had been partially executed, and Racine found himself the sole pupil of four of the greatest masters of the Society, each of whom had a separate and special influence on his character: Nicole, Lancelot, Le Maitre, and Hamon. Presumably, no youth either before or since ever had such an education. As M. Jules Lemaitre says:

"As instruction, it was unique, it was magnificent, it was more than princely. As religious teaching, it was intense."[3]

The solitude of Port-Royal undoubtedly engendered in Racine's brain a habit of reverie which led to poetry. No wits themselves, these stern moralists yet by their education fostered in their gifted pupil a love for literature. Moreover, their so carefully expurgated Greek plays, which they gave him to read purely in order to learn the Greek language and style, unconsciously inspired in him a taste for the theatre. Thus Port-Royal pushed him out into the world. It bred in his passionate soul a desire for life and action. By stimulating the mystical side of his nature, it also awakened his curiosity and imagination.

[1] And this is asserted in the face of Racine's latest biographer, M. Masson Forestier (*Autour d'Un Racine inconnu*), a descendant of his sister Marie, who has tried to prove Port-Royal to have had no part whatever in the formation of Jean Racine.

[2] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, vi. p. 84.

[3] *Jean Racine*, p. 9.

Leaving Port-Royal after three years, and throwing himself into the world, the poet lived a life full of the joys and sorrows brought by a passionate and enthusiastic nature. Yet underneath all his extravagances, all his joys and sorrows, there persisted an undercurrent of his youthful training, for it is an immutable law of nature that in later life the human being goes back to the precepts of its childhood. If that childhood had been carefully nourished and protected from evil, what happiness results from the command to become as a little child again. A childhood without innocence and piety brings an old age of unhappiness and despair. And, Port-Royal drew Racine back to itself with the surest magnet in the world: that of early influence imprinted on the white unwritten page of childhood, thus justifying the whole ideal of St. Cyran and his followers. In his darkest moments he unquestionably saw in dreams that

> "Cloitre vénérable,
> Ces beaux lieux du Ciel bien aimés,
> Qui de cent temples animés
> Cachent la richesse adorable." [1]

A modern writer has said very justly:

"Whoever has passed through the hands of these excellent instructors, and been really touched, returns to them and to their spirit, at least in old age." [2]

In his Abrégé Racine relates that those women of quality who had been educated at Port-Royal were ever ready in after life to testify to their gratitude and admiration for the training they had received. In the midst of the world, its gaieties, troubles, and distractions, these pupils never forgot that Jerusalem of their souls, for the education inside the monastery was in its way quite as excellent as that given in the Petites Écoles, its great fault being that it had the

[1] From the Tenth Ode.

[2] Strowski in his *Vie de St. François de Sales* says of Racine: "He did not preserve the fear of God and the horror of the last end his education taught him, but the habit of loving. See now how he returns to the sentiments of his youth" (p. 392).

M. Léon Séché confirmed this view of Racine in his article written in the *Gaulois*, April 25, 1899. He says: "The illustrious poet of *Athalie* experienced the influence of the Jansenist education he had received at first in his family, then at Port-Royal, and this influence threw into his soul such deep roots that no matter what he did he could never tear them out,"

tendency to *push* girls into the religious life. Even their habits spoke of this tendency, for the white dress of the pupils did not differ essentially from that of the novices.

On the whole, it is extraordinary that in their short existence the Petites Écoles fulfilled more or less all the high ideals they had set themselves, and this without corporeal punishment, in a day when the Duke of Montausier felt privileged to cane his royal pupil, the Dauphin of France, for the least fault, and when Bossuet not only permitted the chastisement, but assisted Montausier in its execution. At Port-Royal, the greatest correction they could inflict was the threat of sending pupils back to their parents. Their whole idea was tolerance, together with " Patience and silence," the positive side of the task being fulfilled by awakening the intelligence of each boy, and gradually implanting in his mind a love of good and a hatred of evil.

When Pascal said :

" Being denied the spur of envy and glory, the children of Port-Royal fall into listlessness." [1]

he struck the criticism of the Petites Écoles. They lacked the modern spirit of emulation which can be translated by the word ambition. Wherefore, although famous, they were never brilliant, flourishing only in their own way and in the shadow.

And in pondering the history of the schools [2] we seem at the end to have been brought back to St. François de Sales, whose simple theology rested on the love of God for man, and the duty of man toward his neighbour. For, leaving the stern doctrines of Jansenius and St. Cyran in their dealings with these young souls, the masters of the schools unconsciously reverted to the Charity which is Love—Love of God—and which is the only road to Paradise.

[1] *Pensées*, chaps. xxv.–lxv., edition variorum.

[2] For their continuation, see Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, vol. iv. and André Hallays, *Le Pélerinage de Port-Royal*.

CHAPTER XI

THE RETURN OF THE NUNS TO PORT-ROYAL DES CHAMPS

"Le contentment ou la joie intérieur enait également des réalités et des chimères. Lorsqu'elle vient des réalités elle est plus raisonnable; elle l'est moins lorsqu'elle est le produit des chimères."

NICOLE, *Pensées*

BY this time, thanks especially to M. d'Andilly's generous use of his own and his son's patrimony, the valley of the Yvette, no longer an arid, putrid wilderness, was a smiling, flowering valley. In remodelling the monastery on the banks of the treacherous pond, the Solitaires reverted to the fifth century of the Christian era; and, as Robert d'Andilly tells us in his *Pères du Désert*, moulded the whole fashion of their lives on the example of the ancient Solitaires. In the early years of the Church, holy men had gone out into the Desert, and founded a new country for themselves—a land of simplicity, holiness, and peace. Owing to the efforts of the fifth-century Solitaires there thus sprang up miraculously in the country of Thebes a wonderful town called Oxyrinque. Within its walls lived twenty thousand Virgins and ten thousand Solitaires, and throughout the place no other sound was heard than the praises of God. Wholly Christian and wholly Catholic, this town was in reality one great Church, or City of God, a new and spiritual Jerusalem.

"Is there," asked M. d'Andilly, "anything more glorious to God than the victories and triumphs of this grace in these perfect models of all the Christian and religious virtues, the Christian Solitaires, who quitted the world inhabited by men to seek a new one uninhabited until then, and to live there like Jesus Christ with the beasts and with the angels?" [1]

[1] *Vies des Saints et des Saintes*, p. 7.

How many pious souls have dreamed of the New Jerusalem! How many have longed to build one on the earth with their own hands! And the ideal picture of the Eternal City varies in the mind of each. As they worked in the heat of noonday in the valley of the river Yvette, striving to turn their Desert into a Thébaïde, their little City of God into a New Jerusalem, the vision of St. John was the picture ever before the minds of the hermits of Port-Royal. It too was "four-square," surrounded by walls. Several great courts were enclosed by the Church and conventual buildings and formed the Cloister. On the north side of the outer court was the entrance of the monastery, the corps of buildings occupied by *Ces Messieurs*, the stables, and the forge. On the south side was the Church, which faced the east, and the Guests' Hall.

The allurements of art were from the beginning fiercely debarred entrance into the monastery. Pursued as she was by the stern countenance of uncompromising Duty and Reform, Beauty fled, ashamed to show her tempting face. There was not an article of luxury, not a sculptured stone, not a moulding. Only in the Church could be detected the slightest taint of that companion of the Good and the True which had worked such havoc in the Church of the early sixteenth century. In the course of time the proportions of the original fine Gothic edifice of the thirteenth century, built by Robert de Luzarches, had become falsified by Nature. And it was now felt that the sinking of the soil would soon necessitate the raising of the foundations twelve feet. But in spite of this disfigurement and its paucity of adornment the Church of Port-Royal was said to shame all other churches by its very simplicity, its lack of sumptuous ornament, which in other temples of worship attract the vulgar gaze of the world. Its altar-screen was of simple carpentry, enshrining a painting representing the Last Supper; its single step leading to the High Altar was modest, indeed, compared with the high approaches of other churches. The wooden posts supporting the screen were at the same time supposed to act as chandelier, while the Host was suspended not in a costly tabernacle, but in a simple receptacle. As unique treasures it possessed but a few paintings by the artist peculiarly fitted to it, Philippe de Champagne, and the beautiful choir stalls presented by Jehanne the First.

On the side of the church terminated by Philippe Auguste's Chapel of St. Lawrence, where were placed the numerous epitaphs and the enclosure made by the Cloisters, was the cemetery with its white crosses. Above the Cloisters were distributed the various rooms called as in all convents the *Parloirs*, those of St. Denis, St. Augustine, St. Peter, Paul and Michael.

Inscriptions were the order of the day at the old monastery. Everywhere were pious words to remind the inmates of their high calling. On the arcades and four walls of the Cloister were such sentences as the following :

" Riches ruin religious houses, and true poverty edifies and preserves them."

" He who perseveres to the end shall be saved."

" There are many called, but few chosen."

Then, on the passage leading to the Church :

" God is in his temple, let all the earth keep silence."

" Think of God in all your ways, and He will Himself conduct your steps to Him."

" One must pray and never weary."

In the Refectory were still other words of encouragement to good living :

" Whether you eat, whether you drink, do all for the glory of God."

" If any one would be great among you, let him be ready to serve you, and who would be the first among you, let him be the servant of all ; for the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve others."

" The kingdom of God does not consist in drinking and eating, but in justice, in peace, and in the joy which the Holy Spirit gives." [1]

On returning to Port-Royal de Paris in 1636, after the

[1] See Tronchay, *Description of Port-Royal des Champs*, pp. 214–220.

PLAN OF THE ABBEY OF PORT ROYAL DES CHAMPS

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY MAGDELEINE HORTEMELS

trouble with M. Zamet and Saint-Sacrement, Mère Angélique had been made Mistress of Novices, occupying herself in addition with the duty of holding conferences of spiritual encouragement for the nuns. But, at the expiration of Mère Agnès's second term as Abbess she resumed her old position at the head of the establishment. The quarrels at Saint-Sacrement not ceasing with Mère Angélique's departure, M. de Gondi, growing tired of disputes, shortly afterward disorganized the elegant institution founded by the first Duchesse de Longueville, and transferred its nuns to Port-Royal de Paris. Not long afterwards it was finally decided at Rome that Saint-Sacrement, together with its property and obligations, should be regularly united with Port-Royal de Paris, the founders and benefactors thereupon agreeing that all funds should be used for the building of a new church.

Accordingly, in 1646, the first stone of a beautiful edifice, designed by Lepautre, was laid by Mlle. de Longueville, heiress of the Founder of Saint-Sacrement, and solemnly blessed by M. de Gondi, under the name of Saint-Sacrement. In the style of the Renaissance, this church was a most impressive structure, with a dome in the middle, and perfectly proportioned. In front of the altar on the ground floor were gratings shutting off the Choir of the Nuns, while above was a tribune from which another grating led into the Infirmary.

An interesting fact connected with the union of Saint-Sacrement and Port-Royal was the change of habit it brought about. When the question was first agitated, Mère Angélique, always stern, was for retaining the ancient Bernardine scapulary of black, but many nuns, prominent among whom was the romantic Anne-Eugénie Arnauld, inclined toward the more picturesque garb of Saint-Sacrement. The matter was decided when by chance a box belonging to the disbanded monastery was opened, displaying the beautiful stuffs and colours formerly worn by these aristocratic sisters.[1] Accordingly, with great ceremony, laying aside their black robes for ever, the nuns of Port-Royal adopted the white scapulary with the scarlet cross on the breast, fulfilling a vision which had come to Madame Le Maitre eighteen years before, when she dreamed she saw the nuns thus apparelled.

[1] *Mémoires et Relations*, pp. 172–173.

It seems that before his death St. Cyran had urged Mère Angélique to return to the Champs, and, having always regretted her old home, a visit made there in 1646, when she saw the improvements that had been made by the Solitaires, strengthened this desire in her.

Two subsequent journeys filled her with an irresistible home-sickness. The silence, the reverence and devotion of even the servants about the place, who treated the nuns as if they were angels, struck deep into her heart. She felt she must return, so, permission having been obtained of the Archbishop, she and a number of the nuns made ready to go. On the eve of the 13th May 1648, the Coadjuteur of Paris, afterward Cardinal Retz, and destined to play so important a part in their history, came to say good-bye; and the next morning Mère Angélique, accompanied by seven nuns and two working sisters, joyfully took the route toward Chevreuse and the Desert, leaving Mère Agnès with the nuns who did not wish to leave Paris behind.[1]

The reception at Les Champs was a solemn and impressive one. When at two o'clock in the afternoon the little band arrived, the bells were ringing, and two parties drawn up in welcome: one composed of the poor of the surrounding country, some of whom remembered the good Mother of twenty-two years before, and who now threw themselves at her feet, in glad greeting and reverence. The other detachment, comprised of *Ces Messieurs*, was ranged behind a priest holding the cross. Without delay the nuns entered the Church, and there, the bells still ringing out joyously, they chanted their Te Deum of Thanksgiving.[2]

In the old monastery that summer there reigned universal gladness and delight. The nuns were ecstatic over their return to the home they had always regretted, and its regenerated condition made their life a continual pæan of thankfulness. As Mère Angélique wrote to the Queen of Poland:

"One cannot imagine a more beautiful solitude. If our sisters had but experienced the peace of this place, I think they would have demanded of God wings of the dove that they might fly hither. But as God loves both houses, and

[1] Lancelot, *Mémoires*, ii. p. 458.
[2] *Ibid.*, i. p. 457.

wishes to be equally honoured in the two, He has not given the same inclination to all."

And now, owing to the labours of the Solitaires, the monastery was truly a delicious spot. Near the Church was an abundant and limpid spring called "Mère Angélique's Fountain." Around it dwarf trees formed a charming promenade, while a little farther on a spot enclosed by the Cloisters had been given the name of the "Solitude." From the Cloisters the "Red Door" led into this shady wood, divided into a number of avenues, all called by different names, such as "The Strawberries," "The Elms," the "*Espalier*," "the Gooseberry Lane," etc. A rustic bridge led over the canal, and in the centre of the retreat stood a great cross. It was in a circle round this cross in the "Solitude" that the nuns used to love to gather with their needlework and even their spinning-wheels; here they came for meditation, and here also they were allowed infrequent intercourse with those *grandes dames* from the outside world.

The near neighbourhood of the nuns, of whom Le Maitre spoke in his oratorical style as "our ladies, our mistresses, and our queens,"[1] had a peculiar effect on the Solitaires. It seemed to arouse in them a kind of old-time chivalry, this knightly feeling being exercised, however, at a distance, for on the arrival of the real inhabitants of the monastery the Hermits had been obliged to remove to the farm of Les Granges at the top of the hill, some of their number who could not find accommodation there being compelled to retire temporarily to Paris until such time as larger buildings could be erected for them at Les Granges.

Mère Angélique did not approve of any communication between the two retreats. That Mère Agnès was as usual much more indulgent is proved by the following letter addressed to Le Maitre during one of her visits to Les Champs:

"MY VERY DEAR NEPHEW,—I believe you think me returned to Paris, or that I am here to live like an excommunicated person, not having deigned to ask for me for such a long time. This is why, with authority of aunt and venerable old lady, I give you an appointment for to-day at noon in the *Parloir Sainte Madeleine*, where I shall make you reproaches as to your retirement. Which does not prevent me from being Yours ever."[2]

[1] In a letter to Madame de Saint Ange. [2] Letter of 15 October 1653.

One of the questions which preoccupied the nuns just before their return to the country had been that of a Confessor. Ever since St. Cyran's imprisonment, M. Singlin had taken his place as Director for both the nuns and the Solitaires, and was virtually Chief in the two establishments. In 1645, however, feeling the work too wearing, Singlin had sent a new Director to the Solitaires in the person of a very learned Canon of Beauvais called Manguelen. The most striking characteristics of this priest were a lack of outward enthusiasm and ill-health. His stay at Port-Royal des Champs was very short, for scarcely more than a year afterward he was stricken down with fever and died. In the meantime Singlin, pending the time when De Saci should have taken orders, resumed his former office. Before returning to the Champs, Mère Angélique had written to her brother Antoine, still in hiding after the *Frequent Communion*, begging him to leave his retreat and come to act as Confessor to her and her nuns. This Arnauld did in secret, feeling obliged to hide the fact of his presence at the monastery as much as possible. In December of the next year De Saci was ordained, and in January said his first Mass at Port-Royal des Champs.

De Saci's is an interesting character to study as a contrast with that of his uncle, Antoine Arnauld, only a year older, whom he adored and defended, and whom, after the publication of the *Frequent Communion*, he had accompanied into exile. He was Arnauld's opposite in everything. Most proper in every way, perfectly well ordered and poised, he was seemingly without that colour and flame of which Arnauld was full, undoubtedly heavy as he was at times. Sainte-Beuve summed up Arnauld's nephew as the

"incarnation of morality, with a certain flavour of polite literature, the languages; the whole dominated and controlled by faith." [1]

De Saci's pupil, Du Fossé, attributed to his master, on the contrary, a mind full of fire, charm, and sprightliness, as well as of knowledge. On taking Holy Orders the conscientious Solitaire wished to rid himself of his too worldly ardour, and, although he soon managed to apparently do so, he was always able to resume it whenever he thought necessary.

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, ii. p. 323.

Possessed of a very St. Cyranesque idea of the Majesty of God, his religion was so sincere and deep that it was his habit when talking with each person on his particular interest, —with Champagne on painting, Dr. Hamon on medicine, Pascal on philosophy,—always to bring round the conversation to God, and to make others talk of Him.[1]

While Arnauld was dazzled by the éclat attaching to the degree of Doctor of the Sorbonne, De Saci hated it. Arnauld loved noise and power; De Saci shrank from any publicity. Arnauld delighted in forcible and hyperbolic language; De Saci had an instinctive feeling for the value of words, and censured the foolhardiness of his brilliant uncle in giving pretext to his enemies for criticism by couching his ideas and principles in words which could be misconstrued.

"Not only the errors, but the imagination of men," said he, "must be combated."[2]

When De Saci became Confessor at Les Champs and Les Granges, Le Maitre underwent one of the hardest tests of his penitence. How, accustomed as he was to St. Cyran and Singlin, could he reconcile himself to this new Confessor, a brother five years younger? It is conceivable that a nature like that of Le Maitre, passionate, enthusiastic, and fiery, had little in common with the coolness, phlegm, and poise of De Saci. Thus, at first Antoine absolutely refused to confess to the new priest. Singlin exhorted, Le Maitre prayed for grace, and finally his repugnance vanished. Characteristically the convinced penitent chose his own way to show his submission, and, selecting a passage from St. Chrysostom, he wrote on it a little treatise which he called "Traité de l'amitié Chrétienne et spirituelle."

"I cannot offer thee an imperfect present; I am giving thee my heart where that flame burns: it is the original which God joins to the portrait,"

wrote Le Maitre.

"My dear brother," answered De Saci, "at another time I would have told you that I could not thank you enough

[1] Fontaine, *Mémoires*, i. p. 339.
[2] Lettre à M. Le Maitre, Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, ii. p. 326.

for the present you have made me; but now I think I am thanking you enough when I say to you that I have received it with an extreme joy, for I believe my own will be yours, and that you will find your satisfaction in that which you have given me." [1]

[1] Fontaine, *Mémoires*, i. p. 377.

CHAPTER XII

THE FRONDE

"They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon." NEHEMIAH iv. 17

THE First War of the Fronde followed closely upon the return of the nuns to Port-Royal des Champs. At first, the recluses on the hill were so far away from the plots, disputes, gallantry, noise, and humour of the wars of Paris, that the news of victories, defeats, or brilliant sallies hardly reached their ears, except as a vague menace against their beloved retreat. When this threat really came near enough to pierce the silence or interrupt the murmur of their chanting, then indeed the spirit of M. de Séricourt and his fellows in arms—among whom were now such celebrated warriors as M. de Pontis, De la Petitière, De la Rivière, De Bessi, and De Beaumont—reawakened; and, recalling their never-forgotten science, they hurriedly made walls around the monastery, opened in them towers of defence, and armed themselves *cap-à-pie* to protect Port-Royal to the death. One of the old soldiers obtained permission to wear a helmet of the Guards of M. le Prince, thinking thus to impose on marauders, while, mounting sentry at the gate, Le Maitre himself stood ready to fire on Mazarinist or Frondist alike. In the intervals, the Penitents went back to their studies, their hoeing and threshing, their boot-making and their gardening.

As for the nuns, the noise and disturbance of the Fronde served but to emphasize yet more strongly the quiet charity and goodness of both the Paris and the country monastery. In her charity, Mère Angélique had always pursued a regular

system. It was her custom to give many poor people in the neighbourhood work to do, and to feed them at the Abbey, when she herself would assist in the distribution, during which she had some simple book of spiritual import read aloud to her beneficiaries. In his *Abrégé*, Racine testifies as follows to the charity of Port-Royal, saying :

" It is not believable how many poor families of Paris and in the country subsisted on the charities made them by one or other of the monasteries." [1]

During the first Fronde, these charities were redoubled ; and if during the Fronde the farm on the heights might have been a fortress, filled with soldier-workmen of the Lord, the monastery in the valley could have been likened to a Noah's ark, for every timid soul in all the country round seemed to fly to it for shelter. Nuns from other convents knocked at its gates to ask hospitality ; peasants deposited their little treasures within its walls for safe keeping, bringing even their daily bread to a place from whence they could be sure of extracting enough for their actual wants. The very courts of the Abbey were full of cattle, the church so piled with wheat, oats, peas, beans, cauldrons, and even the books of *Ces Messieurs*, that in order to get into the choir for the service, the nuns had to walk over the masses on the floor. Added to other features of this terrible period, the cold was intense, and, the supply of firewood becoming exhausted, the nuns were afraid to send into the forest to replenish it.

As usual, Mère Angélique made the best of the situation, and writing to a friend remarked that without the cold there might have been the pest. And, she added,

" With all these things God has so assisted us that in a sense we are in no way sad." [2]

In the interval between the first and second Fronde, Port-Royal sustained several great losses, among others that of both Madame Le Maitre and De Séricourt. De Saci's new dignity as a priest of Jansenist austerity was severely tried by having to stand at the death-bed of these, his beloved

[1] Pp. 36, 37. [2] Lettre d' Avril 1649.

mother and brother. To sustain his Stoicism, his mother exhorted him thus:

"My son, help to make your mother die well, and to place her in Heaven, she who has placed you only in this miserable life." [1]

At about the same time, Port-Royal lost its faithful physician, Doctor Pallu, his place being at once filled by a Penitent of quite a different calibre, who, as lugubrious as the "little Pallu" had been gay, found it difficult at first to win his way into the hearts of either Solitaires or peasants.[2] Yet Jean Hamon, not more than thirty-one years of age, was afterward to be known as one of the "grand spirituels" of the seventeenth century. Although the most singular, he was also one of the most picturesque and poetical of all the Messieurs. There is indeed no more original figure in the history of Port-Royal than the "Grand Epitaphist" of Port-Royal.

The quality of the Latin inscriptions composed by this mystic of gentle imaginative mind and warm heart was superlatively an original one; they were full of the flavour of his own unique personality. But of all his efforts in this direction, the one he made for himself is most characteristic:

"Here rests Sinner John. Do not judge me with too much rigour, which would do you no good; do not judge me with too great indulgence, which would be harmful to me; but fear for me, for both you and me it is salutary to fear; and at least have pity for me; pity always serves those who are its object. Pray to God that He pardon me, because His mercies are without number and the treasure of His goodness is infinite." [3]

Fontaine says very beautifully of M. Hamon that his memory lives in all the beautiful, wise, just, and true eulogies he made of other people, and that these mental works of art are as flowers which crown him and consecrate his friends.[4] As

[1] "Mon fils, aidez votre mère à bien mourir, et à la mettre dans le Ciel, elle qui ne vous a mis que dans cette misérable vie" (Fontaine, *Mémoires*, i. p. 400).

[2] *Ibid.* ii. p. 42.

[3] *Supplément au Nécrologe*, p. 420.

[4] *Mémoires*, ii. p. 565.

physician too he was unique. A profound theologian as well, his wit, science, and learning was turned to the service of a most practical religion;[1] and on coming to Port-Royal, this finest of the students of the Faculty of Medicine in Paris began at once to exercise his gifts for the poor of the neighbourhood.

When called into the nuns' quarters to see a sick person, he entered the sacred precincts with reverence and humility. Nevertheless, being a great talker, he himself told that Mère Angélique was often obliged to come and warn him that he had said enough, and that it was time for him to go. So austere was he in his penitence, that although in coming to Port-Royal he had given up everything he had to the poor, in secret he still gave even his own food to the destitute, nourishing himself on the bread of dogs made for him by a confidential servant of Les Granges called Jean Rose. This food, served on a board, he ate standing in a closed passage-way.

In appearance the Doctor Solitaire was long and thin, his invariable dress of black so sombre, that on one occasion a woman, meeting him in the lonely country, took him for a spectre. But when visiting the poor he always carried a Bible, and it was his custom to say that God alone was the Doctor who could save. In later life, being unable to go great distances on foot, his long gaunt figure could be seen proceeding to the sick of the district seated on an ass, and even when riding about the country on this animal he had a book either in his hand or on a little desk fixed to his saddle. Being very fond of knitting, at times he also knitted as he sat upon his humble steed, praying the while.

In the Second War of the Fronde, which was longer and more dangerous than the first, the nuns in the country were obliged to flee to the hospitality of the Paris institution. As the latter had offered refuge to the nuns of any Order whatsoever, in less than a month it had succoured within its walls more than four hundred souls. The stranger nuns, received by the Port-Royalists like sisters, had an opportunity while living in the monastery of observing the mode of life of the despised Jansenists, and through them many prejudices

[1] In admiration, Fontaine exclaimed of Hamon: "In a word, he was our glory and our example" (*Mémoires*, ii. p. 561).

against Port-Royal were removed, some of the nuns even wishing to remain permanently in their refuge.

"We have won twelve Benedictines by the war," wrote Mère Angélique, "all of whom have the great wish to serve God." [1]

During the absence of the country nuns in Paris, the Solitaires, aided by wealthy sympathizers, took the opportunity of improving their quarters by making important additions to the cloisters and other parts—owing principally to the efforts of the Duc de Luines, one of the numerous recruits from the outside world, who at the time of the Fronde flocked to Port-Royal to settle down under the shadow of sanctity.[2] Two large dormitories and twelve new cells were added.

Charles Louis Albert, Duc de Luines, a son of the Duchesse de Chevreuse by her first husband, the Connétable de Luines, from now on becomes a most important friend of Port-Royal. His wife, Louise Séguier, a god-daughter of the Queen of Poland, was naturally pious, and soon after her great marriage she had succeeded in inspiring a spirit of penitence in the heart of her husband. Filled with a desire to retire from society, these two young people began to build a château in the grounds of Port-Royal, only a stone's-throw from the monastery proper. While it was in process of construction, returning to Paris, the Duchess endeavoured to live in the world without being of it, continually longing to be able to definitely throw off its yoke, yet pursued by strange apprehensions of never accomplishing her desire. And in sooth, on the eve of the completion of the Château of Vaumurier, at twenty-seven years of age, she expired with the words of St. Augustine on her lips :

"O to love eternally! O never to die! O to live for ever!" [3]

Overwhelmed by the loss of his wife, for a moment the Duke thought of becoming a Father of the Oratory. Finally, deciding to retire as a Solitaire to Port-Royal des Champs, and going to Vaumurier, he threw himself with ardour into plans for the enlargement of the nuns' quarters. For many

[1] Lettre du Juin 1652, à M. Le Maitre.
[2] See Mère Angélique's letters of 1652 for full history.
[3] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, ii. p. 313.

years he was so actively engaged in all sorts of work connected with the monastery, that Mère Angélique remarked laughingly one day:

"Heretofore we have had gentlemen for shoemakers, at present we have a Duke and Peer for foreman." [1]

In his enthusiasm, the Duke put his son under the care of Lancelot; his daughter, Mlle. de Luines, in the charge of the good nuns. Later on, however, he returned to the Court, and scandalized his friends by marrying a very young girl, his near relative. This second wife dying also, he essayed matrimony yet a third time, himself living on to the age of over seventy. On leaving Vaumurier he made a present of the property to the Abbey, and it is interesting to hear the fate of the château.

Hunting one day near Port-Royal, the Dauphin of France noticed that Vaumurier was unoccupied. Accordingly, on his return, he asked the King to give it to him, thinking to place in so lovely a spot a person whom he loved. The then Abbess of Port-Royal, Mère Angélique de St. Jean, being warned of this design, promptly had Vaumurier razed to the ground, and the King, on hearing of her prompt action, is said to have praised it. To-day a tavern marks the site of the lordly château.

Among other recruits of the Fronde, who like the Duc de Luines were so impressed by the teachings of *Ces Messieurs* and the saintliness of the nuns as to build houses of retreat at Port-Royal, were the Duke and Duchess of Liancourt. Jeanne de Schomberg, daughter of M. d'Andilly's former chief, the *Surintendant des Finances*, was responsible for the association of herself and her husband with the monastery. Marrying M. de Liancourt at the age of twenty, and sincerely in love with him, the Duchess had much to bear on account of his infidelities. But with pious patience she set herself to winning her husband's heart, and was rewarded, during a long illness, when she nursed him with devotion, by accomplishing her object. An illness of her own, which followed his, finished the Duke's conquest, and, his subjugation complete, the Duchess easily succeeded in inducing him to embrace a life of penitence, ruled over by the advice of the recluses of Port-

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, ii. p. 315.

Royal. For thirty years husband and wife led most pious and exemplary existences, Madame de Liancourt being universally considered the model of a Christian wife. In her ideas of duty she was stern to the point of fanaticism, being continually on the watch lest she fail in some way. Unfortunately, this anxiety would often attack her several times in one night, when, remembering something she had left undone, she would each time rise and make a note of the matter on her tablets.[1] In his later years, the Duke was also very peculiar, and at Port-Royal des Champs people were edified by his extreme politeness, which went to the point of saluting everybody he met. A little near-sighted, even the cowherd appeared a venerable figure to him.[2] Perhaps, he said to himself, it may be one of *Ces Messieurs*—a very reasonable supposition.

After an absence of ten months in Paris, the nuns under Mère Angélique were at last able to return to the beloved Champs. On arrival, they found the Desert very much changed, not merely by new buildings, but by the various mansions which penitents and admirers had erected within the precincts. Added to these was an important increase in pupils and novices. All was now life, movement, spiritual hope, and aspiration. The troubles of the Fronde appeased, the nuns and their leader, in a happy reaction and with no premonition of future calamity to disturb their peace, resumed the daily routine of work, prayer, and charity.

On their part, the Solitaires, subduing both the momentary warlike mood and the restlessness induced by a wave of discussion which had overtaken them while working at Vaumurier, mounted the hill, and once more took up their domicile at Les Granges, leaving the old Abbey below with only the battlemented towers of defence as tangible evidence of the recent presence either of the Fronde or of themselves.

[1] See *Vies Interessantes et Édifiantes des Religieuses de Port-Royal*, vol. i. pp. 411–445.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 446–456.

PART III

THE SECOND PORT-ROYAL

1653–1669

CHAPTER I

THE ENTHUSIASM OF JACQUELINE PASCAL, AND ITS EFFECT ON HER BROTHER BLAISE

"Prenez part aux douleurs dont mon âme est atteinte,
Ecoutez mes soupirs et voyez ma langueur.
Si vous me refusez le cœur,
Au moins prêtez l'oreille aux accents de ma plainte;
Et puisque vos rigueurs me forcent de veiller,
Cessez de sommeiller."

JACQUELINE PASCAL

LIKE the Arnaulds, the Pascal family came from Auvergne; like the Arnaulds again, they too belonged to the upper gentry of France, most of them having held important offices under the Crown, and one ancestor ennobled by Louis XI. The Pascals in Auvergne were acquainted with the Arnaulds in Paris, and when, as a young man Étienne Pascal, son of Martin Pascal, Treasurer of France, came to Paris to study law, he carried with him a letter of introduction to M. Antoine Arnauld senior.[1]

His course of law finished, Étienne Pascal returned to Auvergne, and purchased an office in the Government, soon becoming Second President of the Court of Aids. Shortly afterwards, he married a certain Mlle. Antoinette Begon, who was both pious and intellectual. Of six children born of this marriage, three alone survived: Gilberte, who at the age of twenty-one married M. Florin Périer, Counsellor of the Court of Aids at Clermont; Blaise; and Jacqueline.

Jacqueline was but two years of age when her mother died. Four years later, becoming concerned as to the education of his children, the father sold his office in Auvergne, and removed to Paris.

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, ii. p. 455.

Étienne Pascal's second daughter seems to have been born with talents of an extraordinary order. Strowski, a modern biographer of Pascal, goes so far as to say that she was the brilliant and admired star of the family.[1] In her early childhood she seemed to have a great aversion for study, and Gilberte was in despair of ever making her learn her letters, until, happening to read aloud a verse of poetry, the music of the measure at once struck a mystic chord in the sensitive nature of the child :

" Ah ! " she exclaimed, " if you want to make me read, do so in a book of verse, and I will say my lesson as much as you like." [2]

Before she was fourteen, the embryo poetess had composed a sonnet to Anne of Austria, who sent for her to come to St. Germain. On arrival in the great Palace of Kings, Jacqueline was conducted to an ante-chamber filled with Court ladies, also attending on the Queen's pleasure. These dames at once surrounded Mlle. Pascal, of whose genius all had heard, and at their head, Anne of Austria's niece, the Grande Mademoiselle, herself a very young girl at the time, said to the budding poetess :

" Since you make such good verses, make one for me."

At this royal command, Jacqueline, very cold and dignified, retired into a corner of the room, from whence, returning in a moment or two, she handed to the Princesse d'Orléans the following extemporaneous verse :

" Muse, notre grande princesse
Te commande aujourd'hui d'exercer ton adresse
A louer sa beauté ; mais il faut avouer
Qu'on ne saurait la satisfaire.
Et que le seul moyen qu'on a de la louer,
C'est de dire en un mot qu'on ne le saurait faire." [3]

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[1] *Pascal et son Temps*, vol. ii. p. 17.

[2] From Marguérite Périer's life of Jacqueline Pascal in *Vies Interessantes et Édifiantes des Religieuses de Port-Royal*, vol. ii. p. 339.

[3] Rough translation :

Muse, our renowned Princess
Commands thee to-day to exert thine address
In praising her beauty ; but one must avow
'Tis in vain we would bow to do her this duty ;
For there is but one way in her praise aught to say,
In a word, 'tis to vow that we know not how.

In 1638, Étienne Pascal was among a parcel of malcontents who complained of Richelieu's retrenchment in revenues accruing from money invested in the Hôtel de Ville, and when an order was sent out for the imprisonment of these men in the Bastille, the name of Pascal was on the list. Jacqueline's father escaped only by taking sudden flight, and was still in hiding the next year when Cardinal Richelieu, who had a passion for plays and acting, conceived the idea that he would like to see a comedy performed by children. As Jacqueline's powers in this direction were well known, her name was one of the first on the list of the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, Richelieu's niece.

Quickly learning her rôle, when the eventful day came, Jacqueline acted with such grace and skill as to surprise and enchant her audience, Richelieu among the number. Afterwards, through her tears of fright managing to recite the verse she had composed for the occasion, she poetically begged the deliverance of her father. Richelieu was so gracious, we are told, as not only to take the precocious child on his knee, but to grant her request. In response to her further prayer that her father might himself come and thank the Cardinal, he replied:

"Let him come, and bring all his family."

Étienne Pascal therefore returned in great haste from Auvergne, and soon appeared at Ruel, Richelieu's estate near Paris, with his three children. Looking at Jacqueline and her brother, the Cardinal, who had a rare talent for discovering genius, turned to their father and said:

"Monsieur, I recommend these children to you; some day I shall make something great out of them." [1]

Shortly after this event, the father was made Intendant of Normandy, and the whole family removed to Rouen, where next we hear of Jacqueline's winning the prize at the famous Palinods, under the protection of no other than the poet Corneille. It is interesting to note that at this early period one of her poems was written against Love, "the Vanquisher of Feeble Souls." [2]

Nevertheless, the young girl preserved a very childish

[1] *Recueil de Plusieurs Pièces*, p. 241.

[2] See Victor Cousin, *Jacqueline Pascal*, p. 104.

spirit, for at fifteen, her sister tells us, she was still in the habit of dressing and undressing her dolls. Young as she was, she had a vogue in society. People loved to see the delicate face and charming personality, and when she entered a drawing-room a murmur of pleasure would arise on all sides. Yet she herself was indifferent to this popularity, and quite unspoiled. Gaily and sweetly she went on her way, making verses, keeping house for her father (for by this time Gilberte had married and gone away from Rouen), adoring her brother, paying no attention to the various suitors for her hand, and also giving no thought to entering the religious life, which at this period she rather despised as being incapable of satisfying an inquiring mind.[1]

Étienne Pascal himself lived in the midst of continual scientific curiosity and speculation, being the friend of men like Père Mersenne, Roberval, Carcavi, Le Pailleur—names with which to conjure up visions of all the inquiry and agnosticism which followed Montaigne. Blaise had always been delicate, and his father, influenced by the prejudices of his time, believed firmly that the child had been cursed by a sorceress in his cradle. Determined to have the evil spirit exorcized, M. Pascal therefore sought out the woman who was supposed to have put the spell on the infant, made her avow her crime, and transfer the charm to a black cat. The cat died, and Blaise's cure was completed by a cataplasm of nine leaves of three herbs brewed by a child before sunrise.[2]

Some one has asserted that the key to the peculiar character and individuality of Blaise Pascal may be found in the fact of his education. Brought up as he was between two sisters, he could not avoid taking on some characteristics of their sex, and to them he owed a nervousness commonly called feminine, as well as the rare grace and charm which endeared him to those who surrounded him.[3] Madame Périer, Pascal's sister and biographer, herself educated by her father not only in history and philosophy, but also in mathematics, tells the story simply of how M. Pascal trained his son. Anticipating the method of the Petites Écoles, this wise father would not teach the boy Latin until he was twelve,

[1] V. Cousin, *Jacqueline Pascal*, 10th ed., 1894, p. 57.
[2] Madame Périer, *Vie de Pascal*, in Louandre ed. *Pensées*, p. 25.
[3] Strowski, *Pascal et son Temps*, p. 3.

BLAISE PASCAL

FROM EDELINCK'S ENGRAVING OF THE PORTRAIT BY QUESNEL

first wishing him to realize what a language was : how it was formed, how its grammar had been built, etc. This method of education, as Sainte-Beuve remarks,[1] was exactly the opposite of that used in the instruction of Montaigne, who learned Latin when still in his nurse's arms, thereby acquiring no foundation of consecutive thought. From his earliest years, on the contrary, Blaise Pascal was a thinker, eager to know the meaning of things, Truth being the unique object of his mind's desire.

Up to the age of twelve, M. Pascal père had steadily refused to teach his son mathematics, knowing this science to be " a thing which fills and satisfies the mind," [2] and wishing him to first master the languages. He therefore kept all books on the subject away from the boy, nor would he allow his friends to discuss it in Blaise's presence. Finally, one day, being pressed by the boy to tell him what the science was, Pascal answered that it was the means of making figures correctly, and of finding their true proportions to each other. At the same time, he forbade his son to think or speak of mathematics again.

From this moment, in his hours of recreation, Blaise began to dream of the forbidden kingdom of lines and planes and solids. Imagine the surprise of the father when, on coming one day unexpectedly into the big play-room, he found Blaise on his knees, surrounded by charcoal and geometrical figures. On asking him what he was doing, Blaise replied that he was seeking such and such a thing, which M. Pascal recognized as the thirty-second proposition of the First Book of Euclid. Other questions and answers followed, until the whole sequence of ideas developed. In making his calculations, it was pathetic that, ignorant of the geometrical terms, the young mathematician had invented his own expressions, and designated a circle by the word *round*, a line by *stroke*. M. Pascal was so appalled by the greatness and power of this genius in his son, that without a word he hurried from the room and to his friend Le Pailleur, who, surprised to see M. Pascal in tears, anxiously asked the reason.

" I do not weep from affliction," replied the father, "but

[1] *Port-Royal*, ii. p. 457.

[2] Marguérite Périer, *Mémoire de la Vie de M. Pascal*, ed. *Pensées* (Louandre ed.), p. 77.

from joy!" Whereupon he told Le Pailleur the whole story. The latter, not less astonished than M. Pascal, advised his friend to no longer hold his boy's genius captive, but to give it the wings of knowledge. Accordingly, M. Pascal went home and delivered over to Blaise the First Book of Euclid, which the boy at once read and understood without need of remark or explanation.

At the age of eighteen, ill-health returned, to leave its victim no more, for, attacked then by a nervous disorder due to overwork, it is said Blaise Pascal never spent one day without pain. When at twenty-four partial paralysis attacked him, he had already invented his calculating-machine, and published a sketch of his experiments on the vacuum. The next year, forbidden by his doctor to do any work himself, he made through his brother-in-law, M. Périer, the test of comparing mercurial barometers at the summit and the foot of Puy-le-Dôme, which was later on verified by tests of his own made on the top of the Church of St. Jacques la Boucherie in Paris.

In January 1646, M. Pascal père was unfortunate enough to fall on the ice and dislocate his shoulder. Being confined to the house for several months in consequence, he asked some neighbours of his to come and stay with him. These two Norman gentlemen, MM. de la Boutelleries and Des Landes, were both friends of Port-Royal, and, during their stay of three months in the Pascal household, their patient, together with all his family, gradually became interested in the works of Jansenius, St. Cyran, and Arnauld. Soon afterward, Blaise being very seriously indisposed, was ordered to give up work and go to Paris to consult some physicians. Detailed to accompany her brother, together Jacqueline and Blaise frequented the Church of Port-Royal de Paris. Here both were touched by the eloquent sermons of M. Singlin,[1] and experienced the action of Divine Grace. On going back to Rouen and telling their father of Jacqueline's desire to enter the monastery of Port-Royal, M. Pascal senior was very angry, not only with his daughter but also with Blaise:

"Never during my lifetime will I consent to your leaving

[1] Cousin, *Jacqueline Pascal*, p. 63. Madame Périer chronicles that Blaise was first converted and that he converted his sister.

me," he declared to Jacqueline. "You may lead what life you please in my house, but you may not leave me!" [1]

The dutiful daughter submitted to her father's wish, and for four years longer remained under the paternal roof, having a secret commerce with Mère Agnès and Singlin, but endeavouring wherever she was to isolate herself and lead a life of absolute monastic seclusion.

When in 1651 Étienne Pascal died "in great piety and holiness," his death sounded, Jacqueline thought, her own liberty bell. She was free at last to follow her inclination and retire to Port-Royal. But alas! touched momentarily by the eloquence of Singlin to a more personal enthusiasm, which might be called "conversion," her brother had unfortunately relapsed soon afterwards into worldliness of spirit and practice, and he now opposed where he had formerly encouraged his sister, refusing to turn over her fortune. Port-Royal was most indifferent in Jacqueline's case as to the usual dowry, and had magnificently offered to take its new penitent without a penny, but as this was galling to Jacqueline's pride, she persisted in trying to make Blaise surrender her patrimony. Finally, going to see her one day at Port-Royal, whither she had gone in the meantime, as her sister relates:

"In a tranquillity and equality of soul inconceivable," [2]

Pascal, who really loved his sister tenderly, was so touched by the sadness she could not conceal, that he decided to arrange the matter as she desired. When he appeared at Port-Royal de Paris with the papers transferring Jacqueline's dower to Port-Royal, Mère Angélique at first refused to accept the money unless Jacqueline's brother offered it because he thought it was right, from a feeling of true piety, and not out of pity. At last, persuaded of his good faith, with reluctance she signed the documents, saying as she did so:

"You see, Sir, we have learned from the late M. de St. Cyran to receive nothing for the house of God but what comes from God." [3]

"It was precisely at this moment," says Strowski, "the world was drawing him; into it he went."

[1] *Recueil de Plusieurs Pièces*, p. 250.

[2] *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de Port-Royal*, Utrecht, 1742, iii. pp. 54–105.

[3] *Ibid.*

The only frivolous period of Blaise Pascal's existence, a short year and a half—six months of which was spent, according to Sainte-Beuve, at Paris, six months at Clermont-Ferrand, and again six months at Paris between 1652 and 1654—is shrouded in mystery. Ill health seems to have been uniquely responsible for the change in the great philosopher from an absorbed student to the man of the world. The illness which had taken him to Paris in 1648 was of a very serious nature. Although remedies and care soon brought partial recovery, mental work was interdicted, and, as Marguérite Périer relates, his keen and lively mind could not remain inactive. Thus, Pascal turned to pleasure for distraction. Taking this at first moderately, the taste gained upon him, until :

" He threw himself into the world, without vice of any kind, but spending his time in inutility, pleasure, and amusement."

The philosopher's principal companion in this phase of his life was the Duc de Roannès, Governor of Poitou, a young man of about Pascal's age who had already sounded the depths of dissipation, but who was attracted to Pascal by a great passion for mathematics. On their first meeting, the Duke had taken an instant fancy to Pascal, and had offered him an apartment in his hotel. It was not long, indeed, before this attachment grew until the Duke could not bear his new friend out of his sight, and placed in him not only a fixed belief as regarded scientific matters, but finally in religion. As a result of this friendship with a nobleman to whom all doors were open, Pascal was drawn into so-called " society," and it is recorded that he loved card-playing, the comedy, and intercourse with the other sex, being devoted above all things to the gentle art of conversation. M. Cousin thus poetically describes Pascal's personal appearance at this time :

" His portrait is there to tell us what his noble visage was ; his big eyes flashed flames, and in this time of great and romantic gallantry, . . . Pascal, young, handsome, full of languor and ardour, impetuous and thoughtful, proud and melancholy, must have been an original and interesting personage." [2]

[1] Marguérite Périer, *Mémoire de la Vie de M. Pascal*, p. 78.
[2] Victor Cousin, *Études sur Pascal* (5th edition, 1857), p. 482.

Until in 1843 M. Victor Cousin discovered in the depth of the Bibliothèque Nationale a little manuscript called *Discours sur les passions de l'Amour*, Pascal was supposed to have been practically free from any serious love affair whatever. His men friends were more important and necessary to him. Of these, none surpassed in attraction the fascinating Chevalier de Méré, on the one hand, while, on the other, none who equalled the subtle power of Miton, to whom Méré said :

" Vous savez dire les choses." [1]

Miton loved the world and the card-table, these were his two passions. Otherwise we have but little knowledge of him, and it is also doubtful how much Pascal was influenced by this friend. Probably only admiring him, and enjoying his wit, to Pascal, the attraction of this man was the breadth and flexibility of his soul—his easy morality, which had for basis the habit of making life pleasant for others—the enhancement of social intercourse by geniality and courtesy. Miton had no other moral code.

The Discours sur les passions de l'amour," says M. Victor Giraud,[2] may be attributed to the influence of Méré, and may indeed even be his work, and not Pascal's, for the original manuscript had no signature, and was found placed with a writing of the Chevalier de Méré's, as well as among some manuscripts of Nicole's and other Port-Royalists. M. Cousin at once recognized Pascal's style, and in the language thought he detected to his own satisfaction proof that the writer had experienced the *grande passion*. Other authors of note have contested not only this view, but the authorship of the little treatise on love ; while again, admitting the possibility of the latter, some deny that it proves any particular emotional experience.

In her short sketch of her uncle, Marguérite Périer is the authority for the assertion that Pascal made the resolve at one time to follow the common habit of the world—" C'est à dire de prendre un charge et se marier." [3] In reality, Pascal is said to have had only two strong attachments in his life :

[1] Strowski, *Pascal et son Temps*, ii. p. 244.
[2] Pascal a-t-il été amoureux ? *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Nov. 1907.
[3] *Mémoire de la Vie de M. Pascal* (Ed. Louandre des Pensées), p. 79.

his father and Jacqueline. He loved the latter, says Madame Périer, " d'une tendresse toute particulière." The supposition is that when Jacqueline refused to remain with him, and preferred to separate herself from all she loved, Pascal was tempted to find consolation in the devotion of a wife : hence his project of marriage.

No one has ever believed this fascinating genius to have been dissipated in the ordinary sense of the word.[1] Neither with him nor Le Maitre had there ever been any fundamental irregularity of morals, any sensual or sentimental passion. In the *Discours* he says :

" One asks if it is necessary to love. This should not be asked—it should be felt. . . . By talking of love, one falls in love. Nothing is easier. It is the passion most natural to man."

To go back to the *Discours*, it is strange how soon Pascal discarded its morality, palpably that of the exercise of the passions as a perfectly legitimate means of calming man's natural restlessness, and discovered the deeper, grander, and more philosophical sedative given by the immortal things of the spirit. To judge of these two conflicting phases of his nature, the *Discours de l'Amour* must be compared with the *Pensées*—the former written between 1652 and 1654, the latter an unfinished set of fragments of a tremendous work on Christianity which, planned even before the writing of the *Discours*, was not set on paper until during the last four years of his life (1658-1662), But, as another modern writer on Pascal remarks :

" There are twenty Pascals, each one of whom would merit our study." [2]

It was in June 1653 that Mère Angélique signed the papers which endowed Port-Royal with the dowry of Jacqueline Pascal. In December of the same year the now famous mathematician suddenly felt :

[1] Madame Périer testifies that her brother had always been preserved by a particular protection of God from all the vices of youth (*Vie de Pascal*, p. 32).

[2] Henri Brémond, *L'Inquiétude Religieuse*, p. 8.

"A great disdain of the world, and an almost insupportable disgust of the persons in it." [1]

During the period of spiritual unrest which followed, Pascal did not at once turn to religion, but devoted himself more than ever to his mathematical work, which was full of discovery. Everything he saw or heard was at once turned over in his creative brain until practical service resulted. While in this state of moral uneasiness and mental activity, he also still pursued the habits of the man of fashion. On a certain fête day in November 1654, as he was driving over the Bridge at Neuilly in his carriage, something frightened the six horses drawing it, and, taking the bits in their teeth, they rushed toward an unprotected part of the structure. The foremost pair were precipitated into the water, and the rest of the equipage was about to follow, when the reins connecting the two first horses broke, leaving the carriage and other four safe on the brink.[2] This shock remained with Pascal all his life. Afterwards, the Abbé Boileau relates, he always saw a yawning chasm at his side, and when sitting in his room this abyss was sometimes so realistic that he used to put a chair over it.

The weariness of the world Blaise had been experiencing, and which throughout all the months his sister Jacqueline had also been trying to alleviate by her sympathy and prayers,[3] culminated at last, on the 23rd November 1654, when his tortured soul found:

"Certitude, Peace, and Joy."

That night, kept awake by pain in all his being, both physical and spiritual, turning over the leaves of the Bible at random, he finally stopped at the 17th chapter of St. John:

"O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me."

[1] Letter of Jacqueline Pascal to Madame Périer (8th Dec. 1654), in which she says: "Encore qu'il ait depuis plus d'un an un grand mépris du monde, et un dégoût presque insupportable de toutes les personnes qui en sont" (Cousin, *Jacqueline Pascal*, p. 242).

[2] *Recueil de Plusieurs Pièces*, p. 258.

[3] Letter of Jacqueline Pascal to Madame Périer, 25th Jan. 1655 (Cousin, *Jacqueline Pascal*, p. 243).

Suddenly, in reading these words, an illumination came to the yearning soul that it was not the God of the philosophers and learned men that he should seek, but the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Rising from his bed of pain, he wrote down the feelings which filled his newly-awakened spirit, and, to commemorate the hour of his illumination, wore what he had written as an amulet for ever afterward on his person. After his death, this note, with another piece describing the accident of the Bridge at Neuilly, was found sewn into the lining of his coat. It had been transferred from coat to coat throughout the last eight years of his life.[1]

Pascal's conversion brought in its train that of his two dearest friends, both of whom became from thenceforth important figures in the history of Port-Royal. Having followed him in his worldly experiences, the Duke now refused to be left outside the door which Pascal was about to close for ever. Thus he actually accompanied him into the monastery itself. When the Roannès family and domestics learned of this decision, they fell into such a rage that the concierge of the Duke's hotel, where Pascal happened to be staying at the moment, rushed up to the room of the man he considered his master's seducer, knife in hand, prepared to kill him on the spot. Fortunately, Pascal was not there at the moment.[2]

As with the Duc de Roannès, Pascal's acquaintance with Domat, his compatriot, and of the same age, had begun through mathematics, the two scientists making together several experiments on the weight of air, etc. Like Pascal, Domat was a man of great literary as well as scientific accomplishments, and his book on *Civil Laws in their Natural Order*, was so celebrated in its day, that Boileau called the author "The Restorer of Reason in Jurisprudence."[3] Domat always remained faithful to Port-Royal at a distance, dying as he had lived in Auvergne, but being consulted by his friends on every occasion. His great cry was :

[1] Marguérite Périer, *Mémoire sur la Vie de M. Pascal* (V. Cousin, *Études sur Pascal*, p. 399).

[2] *Supplément au Nécrologe de Port-Royal*, p. 461.

[3] Of his own book Domat said : "I am surprised that God should have made use of an insignificant man like me to make so fine a work when there are at Paris persons of such great merit" (*ibid.* p. 462).

" Shall I never have the consolation to see a Christian Pope in the Chair of St. Peter ? "

Pascal's determination to become a religious recluse resulted from a sermon of M. Singlin's at Port-Royal de Paris. It discussed the careless way in which people enter into life's gravest contracts : their professions, vacations, marriages, etc. Singlin's solemn words of warning on these points seemed to work the vitalizing effect on the converted philosopher's mind. From that moment he resolved to retire definitely from the world. On the Duc de Roannès' return to Paris, too, he found that his penitence was being somewhat interfered with, as Jacqueline remarked, " The Duc de Roannès occupied him entirely " ; so, confiding his dissatisfaction to M. Singlin, the latter at once saw the necessity of withdrawing his convert from such a distracting influence to a place where he could have complete solitude. Accordingly Port-Royal was selected as his most fitting place of retreat, and the day following Twelfth Night, 1655, this new Pascal went with the Duc de Luines down to Port-Royal des Champs. In so doing, he himself hardly knew what was to be his fate : whether he was to stay there definitely, leading like Le Maitre the life of a devotee to penitence, or whether his spiritual directors would find active work for him in the field he had chosen. For the moment he resigned his will to God, and placed his soul in the keeping of Singlin. Neither he nor any of his companions dreamed of the task awaiting the converted mathematician.[1]

[1] " He wrote me from there, "writes Jacqueline in the letter above quoted, " with an extreme joy to see himself lodged and treated like a prince—but a prince in the judgment of St. Bernard—in a solitary place where one made profession to practise poverty in everything as far as discretion permitted." (Cousin, *Jacqueline Pascal*, p. 248).

CHAPTER II

THE LETTER OF THE LAW AGAIN—THE EFFECT OF THE CONDEMNATION OF THE FIVE PROPOSITIONS SAID TO BE CONTAINED IN *THE AUGUSTINUS*

"La Justice et la Vérité sont deux pointes si subtiles que nos instruments sont trop emoussés pour y toucher exactement. S'ils y arrivent, ils s'écachent la pointe et appuient tout autour plus sur le faux que sur le vrai." PASCAL

THE motto for the "Second Port-Royal," which according to Sainte-Beuve dates from the year 1653, was given by Anne of Austria. Turning one day to the Princesse de Guéméné, who stood in the usual circle of courtiers about her, the Queen Mother said petulantly:

"Your doctors talk too much." The doctor at whom this criticism was especially directed was Antoine Arnauld, vowed by his doctoral oath to the Sorbonne to defend the Truth "to the shedding of his blood."

The "Champion of Jansenism" was present everywhere, his spirit rushing underneath the sea of politics, of literary activity, and of religious controversy, mastering him and his friends, imposing its strength and dominance on his enemies, while spurring them on to greater and greater opposition. From this time, too, Arnauld ranged himself definitely, albeit insensibly, against the spirit of both Jansenius and St. Cyran.[1]

The other principal Defenders of the Faith at this time were not, as St. Cyran had asserted on his death-bed:

"Twelve better than himself,"

[1] Nicole was at this period not yet identified with either Arnauld nor Port-Royal. He had been for some time, however, associated with the Petites Écoles, and under the direction of Singlin, but his real connection dates from 1654.

but only about half-a-dozen leaders. These as enumerated by Sainte-Beuve were : [1]

M. de Saci, whose unique quality was direction of souls, and who was not great in a crisis.

M. Singlin, of the same type : gentle and unquarrelsome.

M. de Barcos, absent in his Abbey of St. Cyran, but who in any case would not have made a good soldier.

M. Le Maitre, essentially a penitent, too absorbed in fighting his own rebellious nature to give aid to outside struggles.

M. d'Andilly : sad to relate, Sainte-Beuve is forced to designate Anne of Austria's grower of monster fruits as a "decoration of the Desert, rather than a column."

Thus the Grand Arnauld was the one real fighter, and on him was now to fall the onus of battle.

In the year of Blaise Pascal's awakening to the powerlessness of the things of the world to satisfy the cravings of the soul, the struggle of the Fronde was just over, and Port-Royal had settled down to its everyday life again. The Paris nuns recommenced their customary good work among the poor, the instruction to postulantes, novices, and pupils ; while back at Port-Royal des Champs, Mère Angélique and her subordinates were happy in their enlarged quarters and seeming independence. The Solitaires, too, were contented in their own way, being established at Les Granges, and leading lives of usefulness, study, and goodness.

But during their fancied security, strife and trouble were in the air, for calumny had been at work undermining the peace which the recluses and nuns valued so much. Reports as to the dangerous nature of their organization, and the impossibility of allowing such a menace against the State to remain undisturbed, were being circulated, and at last the Port Royalists became uneasy. Mère Angélique wrote thus to her confidante, the Queen of Poland :

"On fait des médisances horribles à la Reine, *qui croit tout.*"

And indeed it was said at the Court that Port-Royal was a

[1] *Port-Royal*, iii. p. 23.

town filled with many inhabitants ; [1] that discussion of dogma, dangerous assemblies, and continual lectures on theology were going on there. Even the peasants round about believed some of these stories, for one day a raw countryman appeared at Les Granges and demanded to speak to one of the forty priests living there. Hearing these rumours, Antoine Le Maitre, who had previously written a Justification of St. Cyran against M. Zamet, now published a Memoir,[2] designed to discredit the false reports as to their numbers and occupations, describing the mode of life and organization of the Solitaires.

The formation of the Society of Port-Royal was, he demonstrated, in truth the simplest and most natural one in the world. There had never been the least attempt to attract people, nor any effort to form an establishment. The organization had been a gradual evolution founded on the example of the first recluse, and followed by first one friend or relative, then by another. Every Solitaire on joining the community of Port-Royal de Champs had at once taken his own particular place in the domestic economy, and for five years before the advent of Antoine Arnauld and De Saci, they had not had a single priest or theologian among them. In the Abbey itself at the time of Le Maitre's writing were only three or four of the recluses, lodged there to fulfil special duties in the household of the nuns.

The rest of the Solitaires, to the number of ten or twelve—not counting the children and their masters—dwelt in the farm above the hill in two little houses, removed at quite a distance from each other. These were built originally for the farmers. In addition, there was a hut covered with thatch ; one separate chamber, and a new and much larger apartment, the principal part of which was occupied by the eight pupils, its first occupants. In all these quarters there were only ordinary bedrooms, like those of any other house, and with no resemblance to monkish cells. The residents of Les Granges wore no habit,made neither profession nor vows, were hampered by no particular discipline, nor pledged to any stability of residence. Moreover, there was no form whatever of a community, no church or chapel at the farm, the Solitaires being

[1] "There were there," they said, "forty students and forty fine pens, all pointed by the hand of one master" (Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, ii. p. 248).

[2] *Recueil des Pièces pour servir a l'Histoire de Port-Royal*, pp. 208–228.

obliged, like the villagers, to descend to hear Mass in the Church of the Monastery below. In fact, they were held by no rule but that of the Bible, no tie but that of Catholic Charity.

As for dogmatizing, holding lectures, etc., but two of their number were capable of such a thing, Antoine Arnauld and M. de Saci, but these two penitents followed strictly St. Augustine's principles, which were :

" To speak more to God for men, than of God before men. To be ardent in prayer rather than in dispute, and to have the heart full of Grace rather than the mind full of questions concerning Grace."

But no Justification, no story of pure lives and high purposes, could now avail to avert the hostility of the Jesuits, the smouldering flame of whose ever-present enmity had probably been fanned by the success of the Petites Écoles. They resolved to effect the entire extermination of those who had opposed their own special ideas of Christian life and doctrine. Disappointed in the result of their machinations against the *Book of the Frequent Communion*, these enemies now focused their attention on the *Augustinus*.

Although in his preface Jansenius had not only hidden himself behind the figure of St. Augustine, but had submitted his book to Rome in the most humble manner, when in 1640, directly after the death of its author and in anticipation of opposition on the part of the Jesuits, the *Augustinus* was hurriedly published from the Louvain Press, denunciations against it began in Louvain, and soon reached the world outside Belgium as well. Jansenius was called a Second Calvin, and on the one side heaped with censure and scorn, on the other he was hailed as a prophet and overwhelmed with hyperboles of adoration and praise. Yet, strange to say, in 1641 the *Augustinus* was printed at Paris, and furnished with the approbation of Five Doctors of the Sorbonne. Here, too, it was received with extraordinary interest, not only among non-theologians, but especially the Gallican faction, the natural enemies of the Jesuits.

In 1643 the Paris edition was followed by one at Rouen. Then Paris awakened to the fight in three sermons preached by M. Habert of Notre-Dame. These had an immense renown

—offset, however, by Arnauld's defence, undertaken at St. Cyran's suggestion and written in three *Apologies*, entitled :

"Apologies pour Jansénius, Evêque d'Ypres ; et pour la doctrine de Saint Augustin expliquée dans son livre intitulé *Augustinus* contre trois sermons de M. Habert, théologal."

These latter writings had an enormous success in their turn, but their explanations of *Grace* alarmed some of the Doctors of the Sorbonne, who thereupon met together to consult as to what was to be done. One of their number—a certain M. Cornet [1] —conceived the idea of the proper procedure to adopt, which materialized in the drawing up of Five Propositions on Grace—a never-failing source of controversy, and one which lent itself to every sort of subtle distinction. These propositions—which were not openly declared to be extracted from the *Augustinus*—were "embarrassed," says Racine,[2] by very equivocal notes, which although to the very last degree heretical, were so cleverly expressed as to *seem* to embody the exact ideas on Grace which the Defenders of St. Augustine had stated. Taking his composition to the Sorbonne for examination and discussion, M. Cornet found the Doctors divided. Those who adhered to St. Augustine declined to examine vague and anonymous propositions of the kind, and even asserted these in question to be fabricated expressly to make condemnation fall upon *efficacious Grace*. Sixty of the Doctors thus opposing M. Cornet's paper bringing the matter before *Parlement*, that body receiving their appeal, imposed silence upon both parties.[3]

The next step of the enemies of the *Augustinus* was to send in secret a long letter composed by M. Habert and signed by a great many prelates both of Paris and the provinces—some of whom were quite ignorant of what they had signed—to Pope Innocent x, begging him to pronounce his judgment on the Five Propositions. On learning of this move, the Defenders of St. Augustine sent to Rome four clever theologians —Noel de La Lane, Jacques Brousse, Louis de St. Amour, and Louis Angran—with a letter to the Pope, begging him to carefully weigh accusation and defence.

[1] See Ellies Du Pin, *Histoire Ecclésiastique du Dix Septième Siècle*, vol. ii. p. 51.

[2] Racine, *Abrégé de l'Histoire de Port-Royal*, p. 57. [3] *Ibid.* p. 54.

To make a very long matter short, during the two years the Jansenist Doctors remained in the Italian capital, they hardly obtained a hearing. Unable to make oral defence, they drew up one in writing called " L'Écrit à Trois Colonnes," in which they denied that the disputed propositions were contained in the *Augustinus*. But alas ! this writing, instead of elucidating for the outside world the subtilizations of the quarrel, only deepened the feeling of mystification in the minds of those desirous of understanding.

Finally, on 31st May 1653, the Pope condemned the Five Propositions without distinction, saying publicly to the Deputies that the Condemnation had no regard either to efficacious grace in itself, or of the doctrine of St. Augustine, *which would always be the doctrine of the Church.*[1]

Knowing Archbishop Retz to be in disgrace, a Jesuit Bishop of Toulouse called De Marca, who had designs on the Archbishopric of Paris, now offered his services to the Assembly of the Clergy being held at Paris. This was a move most fatal to the Jansenists, for with Père Annat, M. de Marca at once began to work them the direst mischief.

In the meantime, while Arnauld and his fellow-Augustinians ostensibly submitted to the condemnation in the sense mentioned by the Pope, reiterating their statement that they did not believe the disputed propositions to be contained in the *Augustinus* at all, they offered to show that the book embodied quite the contrary assertions. Although this submission satisfied most of the adversaries, it did not content those determined on the destruction of Arnauld and his friends, and they at once published a declaration that the submission was a forced one, and that the authors of it were still heretics at heart.[2] With malignant, malicious humour, they then fabricated a sort of illustrated calendar triumphantly celebrating Innocent x's condemnation of the Five Propositions, in the form of an Almanac called :

" La Déroute et a Confusion des Jansénistes."

As frontispiece, this bombastic creation had an allegorical print representing the Pope seated under the Dove of the Holy Ghost, between the figures of Religion holding the Cross, and the power of the Church, depicted with a casque

[1] Racine, *Abrégé*, p. 57. [2] *Ibid.* p. 58.

and delivering sentence against the Jansenists. Jansenius, dressed in his Bishop's robes, looked very frightened, and with devil's wings on his shoulders was fleeing, his book in hand, toward Calvin, who in his corner was receiving with open arms an old lady wearing spectacles and marked "The Jansenists." The verse placed under the figure of the old lady read as follows :

"Ah ! que deviendrons-nous, malheureux Jansénistes !
Il faut à nos erreurs renoncer à la fin.
Ou nous joindre au party des Docteurs Calvinistes,
Car le nostre aussi bien tient beaucoup de Calvin." [1]

Sixteen thousand copies of this Almanac were spread abroad.

All Port-Royal was disturbed over this attack, and strange to say the quiet De Saci was so infuriated that he stooped to write a reply, which he called

"Enluminures de l'Almanach des Jésuites."

His object in doing this was, as he confessed to a friend, to defend St. Augustine and his disciples, outrageously treated by the Jesuits in their Almanac. His reply, couched in verse, touched every point of the insults against his friends, and ended with these words of defiance :

"Mais que vostre verve féconde
D'Almanachs remplisse le monde :
Déchirez, mordez, menacez :
Et conte sur conte entassez :
L'Augustinenne doctrine
Vivra malgré vostre Moline ;
Et tant que Rome fleurira
Sur sa pierre s'affermira
L'église n'est point variable.
Ce qu'elle a dit cent fois est stable :
On ne la pousse point à bout :
Le Ciel est maistre, et Dieu sur tout." [2]

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[1] Rough translation—

Ah, whatever shall become of us, unhappy Jansenists !
Must we then renounce our errors as a sin ?
Or shall we join the party of the Doctor Calvinists,
Ah, yes, 'tis true that much we owe Calvin.

[2] Rough translation—

But let your fecund mirth
With Almanacs fill the earth :
Sunder, tear, revile,
Heap tale on tale the while.

These " cold pleasantries " of M. de Saci, as in a moment of anger Racine called them, were a strange digression indeed of one usually so circumspect in the matter of Christian morality. Arnauld tried to excuse the action of his nephew by bringing forward many quotations from the Fathers to establish the fact that the Early patriarchs of the Church had often made war in a spirit of peace.

But naught could extinguish the malice of the enemies of the friends of Jansenius. By the efforts of these theologians, the words *efficacious grace and predestination* became phrases so tabooed as to convict any speaker or writer who used them in book or sermon at once of heresy. And every day the enemies of Port-Royal brought forward new accusations against them. Fortunately, as long as Cardinal Retz remained titular Archbishop of Paris, stronger measures lacked the necessary authoritative support to become actually destructive.

When Coadjutor of Paris under his uncle M. de Gondi, Retz had been friendly to the nuns of Port-Royal, but it was not until after his imprisonment during the Fronde that he entered into any kind of partisanship, and then his attitude was explained by the fact that during his time of need the *Messieurs* of Port-Royal had had no hesitancy in championing the Prelate who had previously been friendly to them. When M. de Gondi died, and the Archbishopric devolved on the absent hero of the Fronde, the Port-Royalists again defended Retz against those who tried to divert from him his hereditary office. Thus, although there was no distinct proof that the rebel Archbishop ever actually belonged to the Jansenists, it is certain that they kept in touch with him during his wanderings, and considered him their ally. Like Madame de Sévigné, the nuns always spoke of Cardinal Retz as " our Archbishop."

Pending Retz's dismissal from the Archbishopric, and

> The doctrine of Augustine
> Shall live despite Moline,
> As long as Rome shall prosper,
> And on its stones grow stronger.
> The church is not inconstant,
> Her plighted word stands steadfast,
> One ne'er can force her to a fall,
> Heaven is above and God o'er all.

finding that the mere condemnation of the Five Propositions, which by this time they had openly designated as contained in the *Augustinus*, was ineffective, Père Annat and De Marca drew up a Formulary to the Condemnation.

This document read as follows:

"I submit myself sincerely to the Constitution of our Holy Father Pope Innocent X . . . and I condemn from my heart and by my mouth the doctrine of the Five Propositions of Cornelius Jansenius contained in his Book entitled the *Augustinus*, which the Pope and Bishops have condemned; said doctrine is not at all that of St. Augustine, whom Jansenius has badly explained against the real meaning of this holy doctor."

The two prelates then induced Innocent X to authorize their addition to his Bull, but soon afterward the old, suave, but undogmatic Pope died (the next year, in fact, 1656), and the new Pope Alexander VII at once confirming the Formulary in his turn, lo! the battle had begun.

And now the astute Jesuits hoped to catch the Jansenists in a trap from which there was no escape, for to sign this document in the manner exacted, meant to both nuns and solitaires of Port-Royal giving the lie to their entire system of belief. How could they do it, and retain respect for themselves as "Friends of the Truth"?

Fortunately at this moment the enforcement of the signing of the Formulary as planned by the authorities was arrested by two remarkable events in the history of Port-Royal, both of which were connected with the Pascal family, the one a miracle of the human mind, the other a miraculous sign from Heaven!

CHAPTER III

THE PROVINCIAL LETTERS

"Si cet ouvrage vous plait et vous semble fort, sachez qu'il est fait par un homme qui s'est mis à genoux avant et après."

STROWSKI, after Pascal

THE year 1656, no less momentous in its way than 1636, when Mère Angélique submitted to the spiritual guidance of St. Cyran, marked one of the milestones in the history of Port-Royal. In it occurred both the events which retarded the plans of the enemies of the Jansenists —the writing of the Provincial Letters, and the Miracle of the Sacred Thorn.

The so-called "Provincial Letters" were occasioned indirectly by an experience which happened to one of the influential friends of Port-Royal, the Duc de Liancourt. This gentleman's friendship for the Port-Royalists was well known, and had given much umbrage in his Parish Church of St. Sulpice. Finally, having made there one day, as was his custom, a long and detailed confession to M. Picoté the curé, the latter refused the noble penitent absolution, and even threatened to repudiate him at the Communion Table, saying:

"I cannot grant you absolution, Monsieur, You neither speak to me of the important matter that in your house you have a Jansenist, a heretic; nor of a granddaughter you are having educated at Port-Royal, nor of the intercourse you are carrying on with *Ces Messieurs*." [1]

Then, as no consideration could induce the curé to grant absolution except on complete repudiation of Port-Royal, the Duke quietly left the Church, averring that he was pre-

[1] Racine, *Abrégé*, p. 74.

pared neither to deny his faith nor his friends. Apropos of this incident, M. de la Rochefoucauld, nephew of the Duke, remarked humorously:

"He spends all his fortune in doctors, and he is always ill; in the counsel of business men, and he has always law-suits in hand which he loses; in good works, and he is refused absolution in his parish." [1]

When the Liancourt affair was reported at Port-Royal, there ensued a tremendous excitement which culminated in the defence of the Duke being taken up by the great controversialist, Antoine Arnauld. In a letter addressed to "A Person of Condition," after stating his desire to flee all contestations and disputes, Arnauld proceeded to demonstrate M. Picoté's act to be contrary to tradition and to Christian charity. Shortly after this first and very short letter of Arnauld's, and which provoked ten others in reply from Père Annat, etc., a second letter addressed to a "Duc et Pair de France" (the Duc de Luines)—a veritable volume consisting of two hundred quarto pages—was brought by the Jansenist doctor's enemies before the Sorbonne for its censure.

Revivified by Richelieu about twenty years before this period, the Sorbonne had by this time become the standard of authority on all religious matters—it constituted almost a permanent Council or Assembly of Prelates, with the right to sit upon and condemn or approve anything which concerned religion or the Church. Its decisions on matters of theology were irrefutable; its censure pronounced against suspected books, or those imputed to be bad, allowed of no appeal; and so great was its renown, that not only the Clergy and whole Catholic world deferred to it, but at times even the *Cura Romana* made it its arbitrator in difficult questions. In the building of the Sorbonne were lodged thirty-seven doctors called "Of the House and Society of the Sorbonne," but all Doctors of the Faculty of Paris were Doctors of the Sorbonne. This worthy body was now to distinguish and extinguish itself in the famous quarrel of the Jansenists just beginning—in fact, the Jansenist controversy was the last in which the Sorbonne ever took so active a part.

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, v. p. 46.

In Arnauld's second letter, the Sorbonne at once discovered two points of attack:

First, the author's justification of the Book of Jansenius, putting in doubt that the propositions were contained therein.

Second, his reproduction of the first of the condemned propositions by his assertion that the Bible and the Fathers show us in the person of St. Peter a Just Man to whom the Grace necessary for action had lacked.

The first point was, they said, a question of *fait*, or dealing with persons and facts; the second, one of *droit*, or points of faith and doctrine. Nicole asserted that it was Le Moine, a Doctor of the Household of the Sorbonne, who, with several other doctors like himself, had caused this commotion; that his action was occasioned by revenge for Arnauld's having written his famous *Apologies pour les Saints Pères* against the book Le Moine had published on the subject of a new system of grace.[1]

During the six weeks that these two letters were discussed in the Sorbonne, Arnauld, in retreat at Port-Royal des Champs, was working at a refutation of the charge. As the accredited chief of a powerful party, it was clear that it was he who should compose a reply couched in such terms as to reach not only theological circles, but the general public. Alas! if one may believe Racine's testimony, Antoine Arnauld was far from being a diplomatist:

"Every one knows," says the *Abrégé*,[2] "that he was an admirable genius for Letters, and that there was no limit to the extent of his knowledge; all the world does not know, however,—which nevertheless is very true,—that this marvellous man was also the simplest of mortals, quite incapable of finesse and dissimulation: in a word, the least adapted to form and conduct a party."

Another drawback in Arnauld was the fact that although, when he spoke, fire, colour, life, were in his words, when he wrote, fire, colour, and life had disappeared in a mass of other mechanical qualities very admirable in their way: lucidity, firmness, order, method.[3] Added to these things, at the moment Arnauld was tired. For over ten years he had been

[1] *Notes on First Provincial*, p. 93.
[2] P. 93.
[3] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, ii. p. 175.

writing continually, and his hand was heavy with fatigue. Hence, in spite of good will, the style of his argument showed this mental weariness.

There was ominous silence when the *Messieurs* heard what Arnauld had composed. Understanding their taciturnity, the Chief said sadly :

" I see well that you do not find this writing good for the purpose, and I believe you are right."

Then, turning to Pascal, he continued :

" But you who are young, skilful, and a man of letters, you should do something."

Pascal replied that all he could promise would be to draw up the sketch of a project for others to put into the proper form.

Both by training and experience Pascal was admirably fitted to sustain a close contest of a controversial nature—to do so, in fact, was his trade as a mathematician.[1] In him, too, from conversion, the old spirit of St. Cyran seemed to be re-incarnated. And, as religion was thus stern and unbending, the ideas of the Casuists inspired in him a feeling of horror and antipathy. When, therefore, he set himself to the task of composing something for the world to see, his purpose was primarily to silence Arnauld's accusers ; secondly, to bring to confusion that body of reasoners who from the time Reform had first lifted up its head in France, had endeavoured by their system of relaxed morality to bring back the erring sheep into the fold of the Catholic Church.

The great contemporary expositor of Casuistry[2] was a Spanish Jesuit called Escobar. In his famous *Théologie Morale,* by many citations from the learned fathers of the Church, this writer sustained his doctrine that the ways of virtue are wide.

[1] His sister said of him : " He had a natural eloquence which gave him a marvellous facility to say what he wished to say. To this power he added rules as yet unknown to others, and which he used so advantageously as to be master of style " (Mme. Périer, *Vie de Pascal,* p. 44).

[2] The real definition of Casuistry is : the science of duty. But, like many other things, the meaning of the word became perverted by the exaggeration of the science itself. The science of duty was refined upon and refined upon until discredit was brought upon it for its over-minuteness, which perverted it into an " immoral tampering with the principles of right and wrong " (Blunt's *Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology,* p. 746).

" Ah ! " he exclaimed, " how wrong are they who complain that in matters of conduct the doctors produce for them so many diverse decisions ! They should rather rejoice, finding therein new motives for consolation and hope. For diversity of opinions in morality render the yoke of the Lord easier and sweeter ! " [1]

To confute these men, one needed not only common sense and religion, but theology as well, and Pascal's weak point was his lack of theological knowledge, his education having been that of a scientist, and not a theologian. Still, to one of his fertile mind, this difficulty was easily surmounted, for there were Arnauld's books, notably the two called *L'Apologie pour les Saints Pères* and *L'Apologie pour Jansénius*, at hand. Pascal did not scruple to avail himself of these, a fact which caused Nicole afterward to speak slightingly of him as a " Collector of Shells." [2]

Armed with Arnauld's two Apologies as his theological basis, and inspired in his method of reasoning by the training of his friend De Méré in Stoicism and worldliness,[3] Pascal essayed his tremendous task. His composition was in the form of a letter, which his printers afterward entitled :

" Letter from a Provincial to one of his Friends."

Later on, the whole series of the " Petites Lettres," as they were also called, came to be spoken of as " The Provincials."

Nicole, who under the name of Wendrock published a Latin edition of the *Provinciales* in 1657, declares in his preface Pascal's object in writing the first letters was simply to show that in the disputes in the Sorbonne there was nothing either serious or important, merely a question of words, and pure chicane, revolving on ambiguities that they did not wish to explain. For example, when challenged as to the meaning of the qualifying adjective *prochain* used in connection with *pouvoir*, Pascal found that each ecclesiastic he interviewed put a different construction on it, even while declaring it to embrace the distinct divergence between his party and that of the Jansenists.

[1] *Préambule de la Théologie Morale*, Escobar.

[2] Abbé de St. Pierre, *Ouvrages de Morale et de Polemique*, vol. xii. p. 86.

[3] Strowski (*Pascal et son Temps*, iii. p. 187) is the authority for the statement that the Chevalier de Méré cured Pascal's style of its geometrical stiffness, and that he taught him the ease, charm, and worldliness of the *Provincials*.

In the First Letter, Pascal took up the question of *fait* and *droit*, and tried, by a mixture of irony, vivacity, and subtlety, to show that there was nothing heretical in Arnauld's letter, and that those who brought forward theological quibbles were stupid and ridiculous. The letter began as follows :

" Monsieur,—We have been much abused. I did not undeceive myself until yesterday. Up to then I thought that the disputes of the Sorbonne were very important, and of an extreme consequence for religion. You will be very much surprised, therefore, when you learn in what so great an uproar terminates."

When, on the completion of the First Letter, Pascal read it to the assembled *Messieurs*, there was but one voice among them :

" Ah, that is excellent : that will be appreciated : it must be printed ! " [1]

On its appearance, it more than realized the expectations of Pascal's auditors. Among other dramatic effects, it so shocked Chancellor Séguier that he nearly had a stroke, and had to be bled seven times. Singlin, it seems, was frightened by its tone, which he doubted to be foreign to the spirit of St. Cyran. Ten days after the appearance of the First Letter, Savreux, the ordinary bookseller and printer for Port-Royal, was arrested, and seals were put upon the presses in the workshops of Petit and Desprez, two other printers known to do work for *Ces Messieurs*. The amusing part of it was that the Second Provincial was already set up at Petit's, and that the printer's wife, cleverly managing to conceal the type in her apron, passed through the guards in her husband's workshop, and safely conveyed it to a neighbour, where that night three hundred, the next day, twelve hundred, copies were printed off. The following morning, an apprentice of Petit's took President Bellièvre the Second Letter fresh from the press, whereupon, believing that with the seals upon his presses Petit could have had nothing to do with the printing, the President removed his embargo. The printing of the Letters, therefore, was an easy matter, and the Third and Fourth of the *Petites Lettres* quickly appeared.

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iii. p. 44.

When writing the Third Provincial, Pascal, with a premonition of what was to very shortly happen to Arnauld, wrote as follows :

" I have understood from it (*i.e.* the controversy) that there is here a new kind of heresy. It is not the sentiments of M. Arnauld which are heretical ; it is only his person. It is a personal heresy. He is not heretical for what he has said or written, but only because he is M. Arnauld. This is all that one can find amiss with him."

Not at first intending to indite more than one or two letters, Pascal was drawn on and on by the interest of the discussion until there were eighteen. Only five of these deal with Arnauld's particular controversy discussed in the Sorbonne : the first three, the seventeenth, and the eighteenth. The others attack the morality of the Jesuits, and instead of being on the defensive, give battle to the enemy in his own camp.

Pascal's style is said to have consisted in a keenness of perception, a divination of the interesting points, and the power of carrying the reader on by easy stages, step by step, to a logical conclusion. In these long letters, it is marvellous that this geometrical method never wearies, but that it inspires the reader with buoyancy, life, and vital enthusiasm. One enthusiastic critic describing these " marvellous " Provincials, said that in them Pascal employed all kinds of eloquence. There was a mixture of violent and sublime satire combined with a logic only the more forceful for being hidden under an unstudied style, while the form of the work was in itself dramatic.

But the question that has puzzled everybody in the analysis of the *Lettres Provinciales* is to understand how a scientist could have acquired this perfection of literary style. Could it be explained by the fact that he was a genius ? But genius unaided could never have written the *Provinciales*—education and training must have given Pegasus his wings ; and indeed, not content with the first expression of his thoughts, the author was in the habit of rewriting portions of his works, which would have satisfied most people on the first trial, ten or twelve times.

The humorous side of the otherwise solemn controversy lay in the manner in which Pascal made his serious personages play so comical a rôle that in the midst of the discussion of

the gravest subjects it was impossible to control one's mirth. At the outset the scathing letters were anonymous, but later on they were signed "Louis de Montalte." Naturally the general uncertainty as to the authorship created widespread excitement, and supposition was rife as to their source, even Gomberville being among those suspected. Pascal enjoyed the mystery keenly, and showed a boyish delight in adding to the universal mystification by signing the momentous Third Letter:

"Your very obedient servant, E.A.A.B.P., F.D.E.P." (et ancien ami, Blaise Pascal, Fils d'Etienne Pascal).

According to Sainte-Beuve,[1] Pascal's idea in writing the Provincials was to create a party of sympathizers for the Jansenists among the worldly set. Strowski, on the contrary, analyses his motive to have been the conquest of a really satisfactory theory of Grace which might appeal to the philosophical intelligence.[2]

By this time all the Solitaires had been obliged to leave Port-Royal des Champs, and at first occupying the house of his friend the poet Patrix (an officer of the Duc d'Orléans) in front of the Porte St. Michael not far from the Luxembourg, Pascal, under the name of M. de Mons, was at the moment living at the inn called "Le Roi David" in the Rue des Poirées, back of the Sorbonne.[3] It was in the rooms of the Abbé de Pontchateau, brother of the Duchesse d'Epernon, that the Port-Royalists assembled to laugh over the success of Louis de Montalte's ironical remarks against their enemies who had so often mocked at them.[4] M. Gilles d'Asson was at the bottom of the whole matter, and many of the Provincials were printed in his lodging. There was such a demand for the Letters that

[1] *Port-Royal*, iii. p. 260. [2] *Pascal et son Temps*, iii. p. 169.

[3] In the postscript to a letter dated 26th Oct. 1655, Jacqueline Pascal asks her brother: "Let me know, if you please, if you are still M. de Mons" (Cousin, *Jacqueline Pascal*, p. 266).

[4] Although the Jansenists in general were enchanted with Pascal's eloquence, Mère Angélique held steadfastly to the old-fashioned spirit of St. Cyran. In a letter to Le Maitre, written evidently to thank him for sending her one of the Provincial Letters, she said: "I do not in the least doubt that what you have sent me is very fine; but it is yet to be known if silence in this time would not be still more beautiful and agreeable to God, who is appeased better by tears and penitence than by the eloquence which amuses more persons than it converts" (*Letters*, vol. iii. p. 203, 2nd April 1656).

although thousands of copies of each were printed and circulated everywhere, the printers were not able to satisfy the demand.

Was Pascal really successful in fulfilling the different objects of the Provincials? First of all in championing Arnauld and silencing his enemies?

Even *before* the Third Letter could be published, Pascal's prognostications were fulfilled, and the Sorbonne had taken the firm measure of condemning Arnauld's letter and erasing his name from the list of Doctors of their institution.

While awaiting news of his sentence, Arnauld was walking alone, in a gallery quite at the top of the monastery of the Champs, thinking of the words of St. Augustine:

"As in me they have only persecuted the Truth, succour me, Lord, in order that I may fight for the Truth till the end."

On being told of the Sorbonne's decision, Arnauld fled, luckily. Had he not done so, the Bastille would have swallowed up the Defender of the Truth, even as, a few years later, it did his nephew De Saci.

Mère Angélique had previously written Arnauld that even if his name were effaced from among the list of Doctors, it would only be the better inscribed in the Book of God. Characteristically she added:

"Whatever happens to you, mon très cher Père, God will be with you, and you will better serve His holy truth by sufferings than by writings."

Although the Provincial Letters could not avert the Sorbonne's condemnation of Arnauld and his Letter, they at least explained the vexatious questions with

"such skill, lucidity, and grace," [1]

as to make them intelligible and agreeable to everybody, completely exonerating Arnauld from his supposed errors. Even the enemies of Port-Royal were obliged to confess that no work had ever been composed with a greater spirit of wit and justice.[2]

With regard to Pascal's attack on the Casuists, it was said

[1] Racine, *Abrégé*, p. 98. [2] *Ibid.*

that the clever pen of Montalte had made these moralists, who up to this time had been only faintly combated in the University, the horror and laughing-stock of all the world. Brunétière, in his most delightful preface to one of the editions, analyzes Pascal to have been successful beyond all belief by the clearness of his own vision, the suppleness of his style, the scientific precision of his method and language, in bringing light into one of the most obscure and yet important questions which had ever agitated Christianity. It was also said that he drew

"moral theology from out the obscurity of the cloister and the secret of the confessional into the light of day." [1]

Racine, when enraged against his old masters of the Petites Écoles, exclaimed:

"And does it seem to you that the *Lettres Provinciales* are anything but comedies?"

Something greater than comedies they must have been to have evoked praise from such men as Boileau and Voltaire, not to mention a thousand other eulogies from contemporary and later writers. To Boileau they were the most perfect examples of prose in the French tongue, and he ranked their author as the one exception to his own dictum that the Ancients were superior to the Moderns. The comment of Voltaire, most captious of critics, is from a literary point of view the greatest of all encomiums:

"The first book of genius to be seen in prose," he said, "was the collection of the *Provincial Letters* in 1654. In it there is not a single word which after a hundred years shows the change which often alters living languages. This work must be placed at the period of the fixation of language." [2]

The opinion of Bossuet is indicative from the spiritual standpoint. When asked what book he would most like to have written, the tutor of the Dauphin of France replied without hesitation: *Les Provinciales*. From still another point of view, yet a fourth critic asserted that

[1] Introduction to edition of *Provinciales* (Hachette, 1896) by Ferdinand Brunétière, p. ix.

[2] *Siècle de Louis XIV*, iii. p. 107.

" Molière has nothing pleasanter than the first Provincial nor Bossuet anything more sublime than the last."

After these testimonies, who would not have written " comedies " such as these ?

Molière and La Bruyère in their satires on hypocrisy continued the work Pascal had begun. This resemblance was noticed in Pascal's day, for an absurd tale was circulated that *Ces Messieurs* of Port-Royal were in the habit of correcting the proofs of Molière's comedies. For the matter of that, although Molière was contemporary with and about the age of Pascal, he at that time knew none of the Port-Royalists except the Prince de Conti, his first patron and schoolfellow, who when converted turned against all plays and play-actors, Molière in particular.

The morality to be deduced from Pascal's arguments differed, to be sure, but little from that which had been evolved in other ages under the spur of indignation against corruption and hypocrisy. In France it had notably held sway during the reign of Louis XII—when Protestantism nearly crept into power—then under the great example of tolerance, Henri IV.

But, having launched the spirit of a satire which Molière and La Bruyère were to carry on, Louis de Montalte, sitting in the quiet and solitude of his room behind the Sorbonne, had begun to wonder if he knew the Nature of Man. Even while the first notes of his success and fame were sounding in the world about him, his profound mind had progressed beyond the work in hand, and was grasping yet another problem—one which turned suddenly from the worldly and satiric vein the Provincials embodied, and from the " morality of honest people," into the paths of pure religion. The result was the highest expression of his genius, the *Pensées*.

CHAPTER IV

MIRACLES AND SIGNS

" Je ne serais pas Chrétien sans les miracles, dit Saint Augustin "

IT was while Blaise Pascal was absorbed in the composition of his Twelfth Provincial that the second event occurred to delay the execution of the vengeance of the enemies of Port-Royal. This thing touched the great Philosopher most nearly. Seeming to come directly from God, it belonged to that singular class of religious phenomena which for want of a better name people call miracles. From the beginning the elucidation of preternatural manifestations have baffled not only the credulous, but most particularly people of sound mind and heart, whose judgment and experience teach them the difficulty of probing the supernatural by means of the material senses. If the Port-Royalists, with their downright minds, had essayed to explain incidents of the kind, they must, as lovers of *la Vérité*, have branded them works of the devil. Their creed, however, taught the acceptance of God's decrees by faith, and they acknowledged that

" When Faith speaks, one knows well enough that Reason must not say a word."

Up to this time Port-Royal had not often been called upon to puzzle over the supernatural. The first really remarkable thing to occur in their midst was connected with the Fourth Solitaire, M. de Bascle,[1] who, shortly after joining the workers at Port-Royal des Champs, became so ill with a disease called quartan ague as to have gone into convulsions, and been given up by the doctors. In the hope of betterment, he was sent from the marshy Champs to Port-

[1] *Recueil de Plusieurs Pièces*, p. 173.

Royal de Paris. After three months there, he was no better, and so weak that he could walk only with the aid of two crutches. On hearing the news of the death of St. Cyran, however, M. de Bascle managed somehow to drag himself from Port-Royal de Paris to St. Cyran's lodging opposite the Chartreux—quite a long distance. Ascending the stairs to the room where the Saint had just drawn his last breath, and kissing the feet of his dead master, the miracle happened. The cripple, who only a few moments before had hardly been able to move, now suddenly and miraculously threw away his crutches, and walked easily without any assistance down from the high room to the street. Some accounts say he returned on foot to the Rue de la Bourbe, others that he was persuaded to ride on St. Cyran's horse. Shortly afterward he continued his way on foot to Notre Dame, where he gave thanks for his recovery.[1]

The next remarkable event happened four years later at Port-Royal de Paris. In January 1646 their first elective Abbess, Mère Genéviève le Tardif, was dying, and the community being assembled round her bedside, began, according to custom, as the soul of this good Christian was passing, to intone the *Subvenite*. Wonderful to chronicle, as their own voices rose, they seemed to hear other and angelic tones mingling with the chant—

"Making a supernatural harmony."

If this were imagination, Mère Angélique de St. Jean, the narrator, continues, there was at least great cause for believing the angels rejoiced at receiving the soul of the good Abbess, and

"If error was in our senses, truth was in our hearts."[2]

The facts of the miracle of the *Sainte Epine*, as told simply if at length by Racine, Madame Périer, and Jacqueline Pascal, are these: At the very moment of the censure against Arnauld in the Sorbonne, a certain ecclesiastic noted for his piety, called M. de la Potherie, had been lending to several

[1] In his *Histoire*, M. Le Maitre relates that De Bascle returned to Port-Royal des Champs in perfect health, and remained so for several years without any kind of an illness, working regularly with his companion hermits (*Ibid*, p. 189).

[2] *Vies Interessantes*, vol. ii. p. 13.

convents of Paris a sacred thorn said to be from the crown of Christ. The nuns of Port-Royal de Paris, although at the moment full of anxiety and apprehension and under the strain of what had happened to Arnauld, were curious to see this famous relic, and asked the loan of it for their convent. Accordingly, the Friday of the third week in Lent, it was placed inside the choir on a kind of altar. The community was then told to form in procession after Vespers, and at the stated time, as first the nuns of profession, then the novices, and finally the pupils passed, each kissed the relic. Last of all came Margot Périer, Pascal's niece. For three years and a half this child of ten years of age had been afflicted with a lachrymal fistula in the corner of her left eye, and a large mark much disfigured the outside of the face. Within, the poison had worked great havoc, especially on the left side, which could not be touched without giving great pain, while the fester too had become so unpleasant as to occasion her separation from the other children. Kept in a room apart, she was attended out of pity by an older companion. Everything the eminent oculists and surgeons of France could do, had been done, but in vain. Finally the three most skilful surgeons of Paris declared that there was nothing left but the burning out of the whole infection. Just before the advent of the Sacred Thorn in the monastery the day had been fixed for the operation, and M. Périer, the father, had already left his home in Clermont to be present. Therefore, as the little one stood at the altar that morning, Sister Flavie, mistress of the pupils, looking at her with compassion, said kindly :

" Recommend yourself to God, my daughter, and touch your sick eye with the Sacred Thorn."

So saying, she herself helped to press the relic against the eye of the sufferer. Margot afterward confessed that at the moment her heart was filled with ecstasy of faith, and a deep conviction that she would be cured. As she and her companion, passing out of the church with the others, regained their room, Margot cried out joyously :

" Sister, I have no longer anything the matter with me, the Sacred Thorn has cured me."

Looking at her, the other pupil saw in reality that the child's

left eye now seemed quite as normal as the other, there being no sign of either cut or swelling.

Imagine the excitement of the two girls! But it was the hour of silence—and Lent. So, with marvellous self-control, they went to bed without saying a word to anybody.

When told of the miraculous event, the Abbess, aware of the feeling against Port-Royal, hesitated to spread it abroad, and for six days afterward even several of the nuns inside had not heard of it. Some time later, one of the three surgeons who had previously attended Marguérite Périer[1] came to Port-Royal to visit another ill person, and asked to see the little girl with the fistula. Brought before him, however, he did not recognize his former patient. Being assured that it was she, and filled with amaze, he made a variety of tests, inquiring the details of its happening. On the simple recital of facts, this doctor at once started off to fetch his two colleagues. These gentlemen were equally amazed and bewildered, confessing in their turn that God alone could have effected such a cure.[2] Belief in the miracle of the Sacred Thorn was indeed universal, for even the famous enemies of the Jansenists could not deny the wonderful facts, and contented themselves with saying that it was a demon who had performed it.[3]

In November 1656, M. de Hodencq, Vicar-General of Paris, in the name of Cardinal Retz, still absent, solemnly approved the miracle, and the Te Deum was celebrated in the church of Port-Royal de Paris by the prelates of Paris.[4]

The pious Port-Royalists accepted the manifestation simply, welcoming it as a sign from heaven of the equity of their cause. Pascal's joy and amazement at the news, which he looked upon under the circumstances almost as a personal attention from God to himself,[5] can be imagined. And it was an inexplicable thing that in the midst of the triumph of mind

[1] Since the wonderful event the familiar name of Margot had already been changed into the more respectful "Marguérite."

[2] Sainte-Beuve gives a simple and logical explanation of how the miracle might have happened. See *Port-Royal*, vol. iii. p. 179.

[3] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iii. p. 179.

[4] This approbation of the Miracle was printed in 1656 at Paris. See Tracts relating to the Jansenists.

[5] "My brother was perceptibly touched by this grace," says Madame

over matter as evidenced by the most brilliant period of the Provincial Letters, there should have come to Port-Royal, and to Pascal himself, the miracle of the Sacred Thorn. Too much a product of his scientific training to accept the matter without proof, after his first astonishment, Pascal lost no time in probing the miracle to the bottom. He consulted M. de Barcos, the greatest theological authority of his acquaintance, on the real definition of the term, etc., studied with the utmost attention the meaning, extent, and result attributed by theology to such supernatural signs. Satisfied at last, he then celebrated his conviction by changing his coat of arms to the symbol of an eye in the centre of a crown of thorns, with the motto :

" Scio cui credidi " [1] (I know in whom I have faith).

To Jacqueline Pascal, the miracle was but another evidence of the power of the Almighty sent to make the heart of mortals tremble and feel afraid.

" It is a double joy," she wrote to her sister, " to be favoured by God when one is hated by men." " Pray to God for us," she added, " that He prevent us from raising ourselves in the one and abasing ourselves in the other, and that He give us grace to regard both equally as the effects of His mercy." [2]

The wonder of it awakened her almost forgotten art of poetry, of which she now made use in testifying her gratitude to God.

" Tes merveilles, Seigneur, pénétrant jusqu'à moi
Ont agréablement troublé ma solitude.
. . . . . .
Ce miracle étonnant, dans un divin transport
Me presse de parler par un si saint effort,
Que je ne puis sans crime être encore en silence." [3]

Périer, " which he regarded as if made to himself, it being done to a person who, in addition to her near relationship, was his spiritual daughter by baptism."

[1] Strowski, *Pascal et son Temps*, iii. p. 135.

[2] Letter of 20th March 1656 (Cousin, *Jacqueline Pascal*, p. 270).

[3] Rough translation—

" Thy marvels, Lord, penetrating to my retreat,
Have agreeably troubled my solitude.
. . . . . .
This surprising miracle, in a divine transport,
Presses me to speak by so holy an effort
That I cannot in sooth without crime keep silence."

(*Ibid.* p. 283.)

Naturally the healing of Marguérite Périer[1] was followed by other miraculous cures. The letters of Mère Angélique to the Queen of Poland are full of them. The strange part in the whole matter was that the Sacred Thorn—which in awe and wonder M. de la Potherie at once after the miracle presented to Port-Royal — made no cures outside of the monastery. Ill unto death, and sending for the relic, although the Duchesse de Lesdiguières kept it nine days, she died nevertheless. The Princesse Palatine, on the contrary, content in her extremity to apply a piece of linen which had touched it, recovered.

Somewhat later on, another seemingly supernatural and miraculous sign, again in a moment of danger, was vouchsafed to the monastery.

This event brings us into touch with a man of great importance in the history of Port-Royal.

"If," said Victor Cousin,[2] "one should lose the writings of Port-Royal, in Champagne one would find Port-Royal still intact."

Philippe de Champagne, a native of Belgium, had come over to France as early as 1621, and, already a painter of note, having studied under Rubens, he was fortunate enough to be employed by Marie de Médecis in the decoration of her new palace of the Luxembourg, becoming in a few years so celebrated in Paris that no public function was held without his pencil being called in to fix its souvenir on canvas. Everywhere the walls of municipal and public buildings were decorated with specimens of his art,[3] the magnificence of the Luxembourg, the Palais Cardinal, the Tuileries, and even the dome of the Sorbonne being due in great part to him.

Strangely enough, it was M. de Péréfixe, then Abbé, not yet Archbishop, who first told the painter of Port-Royal. One day the conversation between these two old friends happened to turn on a religious book just then making a stir in the world—the *Book of the Frequent Communion*. M. de Péréfixe express-

[1] Who lived, by the way, to the age of eighty-seven, and wrote a short life of her uncle.

[2] *Du Vrai, du Beau et du Bien*, p. 235.

[3] Ch. Gailly de Taurines, *Père et Fille*, p. 14.

ing great admiration for the work, Champagne asked who was the author.

"It is M. Arnauld, one of the persons who conduct the house of Port-Royal. He is the brother of Mère Angélique, the Reformer Abbess of the Monastery." [1]

At the moment, M. de Champagne was in search of some such institution in which to place his two motherless girls, so, without more ado or inquiry, shortly after this conversation with M. de Péréfixe, he took both the children to Port-Royal de Paris, and left them there in the charge of the good nuns. A few years afterward one daughter died at Port-Royal, and shortly after the Miracle of the Sacred Thorn the other became a nun under the name of Sœur Catherine de Sainte-Suzanne. Unfortunately, she had hardly taken the veil, when at the age of twenty her right side became paralysed. Bled thirty times in fifteen months, and every other known remedy tried, nothing availed to bring back movement into her poor rigid members. For four years, fever never left her night and day. Throughout, the invalid was sustained and encouraged by the stoical admonitions of Mère Agnès—principles afterward incorporated in the little book called *L'image d'une Religieuse parfaite*. A nun, said the author, should have an aversion for her body, regarding it as a source of corruption; illness should be but a welcome discipline for the soul; Death but the opening of a door into Eternal Life.

These lessons were difficult for the young nun to practise, when out of doors she saw smiling Spring succeeded by the sadness of Autumn, as it in its turn ceded to the cold winds of Winter. The only change in the monotony of her life, as she lay extended in her chair, was when she was carried into the church for communion, or they brought her to the grating in the *parloir* to talk to her father.

One day it occurred to the sister who had charge of the invalid, and who was touched by a sight of her sufferings, to ask Mère Agnès to institute a *neuvaine* [2] in the monastery for the recovery of Sœur Catherine de Sainte-Suzanne. At first Mère Agnès refused on the principle that if God had thus afflicted Sœur Catherine, it was because He wished her to be ill.

[1] Ch. Gailly de Taurines, *Père et Fille*, p. 26.
[2] A season of nine days' prayer.

However, the young girl's companion begged so hard that finally Mère Agnès's objections were vanquished, and she consented.

The season of prayer began on the 29th December; it finished on Twelfth Night. That morning, Sœur Catherine had been carried to the *parloir* to see her father. On coming away, she had wanted to hear Vespers, so she was taken to the tribune near her room in the infirmary, overlooking the choir of the nuns. When Vespers was over, the poor child strove to put down her foot to see if she could walk, but, alas! her muscles were as rigid and immovable as ever.

"Oh, ma mère," she said in desolation to Mère Agnès, "if I am not cured to-morrow, I shall never be cured."

That night she was worse then ever, sleepless, restless, and agitated by fever, and on the morrow, when asked how she felt, she complained of having suffered intensely, and not slept all night.

During Grand Mass, they left her in her cell with the door open, as from there she could hear the service. Just as the priest intoned the words:

"It is truly worthy and just, equitable and salutary, that always and everywhere we should praise Thee, O holy Saviour, Father all-powerful, Eternal God,"

the idea came to Catherine to try to walk. Making the attempt, she found that by holding on to the furniture and walls, she was able to use her feet. Realizing this, but too excited to try to walk, as the Host sounded she sank to her knees, then rose easily and sat down again. A nun passed. Calling her, Sœur Catherine begged that the sister who attended her should be sent for. When the latter entered the room, the former paralytic rose and walked toward her. Then, accompanied by the sister, she went to the tribune overlooking the choir; and, after adoring the Holy Sacrament, proceeded to the cell of Mère Agnès, descending thence with the latter down the forty steps to the church, there to kneel before the Holy Sacrament and the Crèche. When this was done, it was she who helped the aged Mère Agnès to reascend the same staircase leading back to their cells.

However, Sœur Catherine's miraculous cure brought forth little fruit outside the monastery.

From Beauvais, M. Hermant wrote to M. d'Andilly :

" The voice of miracles makes itself heard farther than that of men. . . . Let us have pity on those to whom these prodigies are but a matter of hardening and prevarication." [1]

But Racine does not even mention it in the *Abrégé*. Yet it created a very great work of art, now ornamenting the walls of the Louvre—the " Ex Voto " of Philippe de Champagne, made according to the inscription still to be seen on the painting :

" In testimony of so great a miracle, and of his joy."

The painting, evidently depicting the moment before the miracle happened, represents Mère Agnès on her knees, and Sœur Catherine de Sainte-Suzanne in a half-lying posture. Both have their hands joined, and are praying.

For fourteen years Philippe de Champagne was associated with Port-Royal, and during that time he had painted nearly every one of the nuns and Solitaires, and won a way for both himself and his art into their confidence.[2] His were indeed the only creations of beauty admitted at Port-Royal. Like the softening influence of women, the Solitaires feared the power of any æsthetic emotion which might disturb them in their contemplation of the New Jerusalem, and they therefore translated art solely by its use in religion. Music belonged to the category of disturbing emotions, so there was no organ to entrance the ear, no flowers to seduce the sight or enrapture the sense. Moreover, on the altar no gleam of candles distracted the nuns from their penitential prayers and orisons. All was simple, sincere, and true.

" There was enough without that, they thought, to excite piety, which has no need of things which attach the senses too much to transport the heart in the wounds of Jesus Christ." [3]

Champagne, however, was an exception—he had become

[1] Godefroi Hermant, *Mémoires*, vol. v. p. 424.

[2] The only treasures of the Churches of Port-Royal were the work of his hands. At the Champs were his famous " Céne " (Last Supper), now in the Louvre, with its panels of the Virgin and St. John the Baptist, while in the cloisters was a beautiful " Christ at the Tomb," several other canvases being scattered through the church.

[3] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iv. p. 149.

MÈRE AGNÈS AND SŒUR CATHERINE DE SAINTE-SUZANNE

FROM THE EX-VOTO OF PHILIPPE DE CHAMPAGNE. (LOUVRE)

an inseparable adjunct of their religion. And this was explained by the nature of the man himself—austere and deeply religious, he might have been a painter-copy of St. Cyran. To live honestly and portray the Truth as he saw it, according to his inner vision—this was his Rule of St. Bernard.

The bad odour under which Port-Royal suffered at Court naturally reacted on Philippe de Champagne as on other friends. For his last public work, the decoration of the Castle of Vincennes prior to the advent of the new Queen Marie-Thérèse, M. Colbert had delayed payment, treating the great artist like a common workman.[1] The illness of his daughter next caused him exquisite pain, and she had only just been cured when the troubles of the monastery removed her farther than ever away from him. But to the end this great painter quietly followed the principles he had ever practised both in his life and in his art, enduring with Christian piety and unconsciousness the attacks which the jealousy of fellow-artists made upon him, seeing with indifference such colleagues as Le Brun outstripping him in momentary renown. The obloquy attaching to his name as friend of Port-Royal, he accepted with the same resignation with which he had suffered his daughter's decision to become a nun, led her to the altar, and given his unique treasure to God. His last will and testament breathes the same Christian spirit :

" Considering," it ran, " that there is nothing more certain than death, but that the hour is not sure, I declare my firm wish to live and die in the sentiments of the Apostolic Roman Church . . . all shall be done in simplicity, but I desire my heir to have many prayers said for me, and the sacrifice of the Mass performed by respectable priests. . . ." [2]

Among other bequests was a legacy to the Abbey of Port-Royal des Champs, to which his daughter now belonged and where she lingered on twelve years longer.

The mention of Philippe de Champagne's death in the *Nécrologe* of Port-Royal was as simple as his life and work. It read :

" The 14th August 1674, decease of M. Philippe de Champagne, good painter and good Christian." [3]

[1] Gazier, *Philippe et Jean Baptiste de Champagne*, p. 68.
[2] Ch. Gailly de Taurines, *Père et Fille*, p. 250.
[3] *Nécrologe de Notre-Dame de Port-Royal*, p. 330.

CHAPTER V

EFFECT OF THE PROVINCIAL LETTERS ON PORT-ROYAL—DEATH OF ANTOINE LE MAITRE

"La verité est bornée par les mers, les fleuves, les montagnes—un méridien, comme l'a dit Pascal, en décide. . . . La religion est en elle-même et par elle-même. Elle est la verité sur laquelle les lois ne décident point."

ROYER-COLLARD

IT has been said that one way to divide up the reign of Louis XIV would be according to his Confessors, as his conduct was regulated wholly by their advice.[1] These important personages belonged to the Society of Jesuits, and it happened that at this period the priest in power was no other than Père Annat, one of the authors of the Formulary. Recently been the subject of ridicule in connection with his royal master, whose youthful indifference with regard to religious matters was well known, the condemnation of the so-called *Apologie des Casuistes*[2] by both the Pope and the Inquisition at about this time, covered Père Annat with confusion, and gave rise to the following song at the expense of a Confessor who countenanced such relaxed morality. Put in the mouth of Louis XIV, these words went the rounds of Paris :

"Le Père Annat est rude,
Et me dit fort souvent
Qu'un péché d'habitude
Est un crime fort grand :
De peur de lui déplaire
Je change la Vallière
Et prends la Montespan." [3]

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[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iii. p. 264.

[2] A book written by a friend of Père Annat's called Père Pirot, published in 1657, condemned in 1659.

[3] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iii. p. 265.

Nevertheless, this determined enemy of Port-Royal had been steadily poisoning the King's mind against the nuns and Solitaires, whose destruction he was bent on compassing at any cost. It was said that every day for months the name of Port-Royal was heard in the Council Chamber of the Louvre. Accordingly, in March 1656 an order came to Port-Royal des Champs for the dispersion of the Solitaires and pupils of the schools, and in four days the so-called "Second Dispersion" took place, M. d'Andilly leaving with the rest, and returning to Pomponne. Mère Angélique wrote the details of the dispersion to the Queen of Poland, ending her letter with the remark:

"Our valley has been in truth a valley of tears." [1]

The Second Dispersion had hardly taken place before the Queen Mother, who had been prime mover in the order regarding Port-Royal des Champs, repented of her deed, her repentance being partly occasioned by the Miracle of the Sacred Thorn, partly by the Provincial Letters. Together these two things had so worked on her piety as to cause her to hesitate. As usual, her first expression of indulgence was evidenced toward her friend M. d'Andilly. He had been but a month at Pomponne when, by permission of the Queen, on the first of May he returned to Port-Royal des Champs, there to enjoy the opening of Spring. Mazarin too seemed indifferent. So, much to the general surprise, a lull descended upon the budding persecution of the Jansenists. Gradually, under the surety of this happy respite, and although at heart the Port-Royalists knew that trouble was still lurking in the background, the Champs again became populous, and life at Port-Royal de Paris also resumed its ordinary course.

It was during this season of calm that the Grande Mademoiselle made her famous visit to Port-Royal des Champs and M. d'Andilly. When she arrived, she found her father's former secretary quietly translating Sainte-Thérèse, and on his conducting her through the monastery she cried out in astonishment at the sight of images of the saints in the cells of the nuns, everywhere quite as she was accustomed to see them in other orthodox convents. Although her exclamation was

[1] Letter of 24th March 1656. In speaking of the Solitaires, Mère Angélique always called them "Nos Hermites."

heard, no one dared, as Mademoiselle proudly asserted, to question her as to what it meant. M. d'Andilly was not so timid as the nuns, and to him the Grande Mademoiselle confessed that she had not expected to see there those symbols of simple devotion. M. d'Andilly's reply was :

"You are going back to the Court, you might render testimony to the Queen of what you have seen."

This the Grande Mademoiselle promised to do, further remarking, at the end of her visit, the pleasure she had in all she had seen and heard.[1]

During the respite, a great grief came to Port-Royal in the death of its first Solitaire, Antoine Le Maitre, who on Arnauld's flight after the censure had been chosen to accompany his uncle into hiding, in order that he might aid Port-Royal's controversialist with his pen. But on beginning again to fill his days with literary labours, the former man of letters found the old temptations assailing him once more, and even after all the years of discipline and self-denial he was still not strong enough to trust himself. He therefore gave up his place to Nicole, who from thenceforth became the inseparable friend and companion of the Grand Arnauld.[2]

Alas ! for poor Le Maitre. He had never recovered from that concupiscence of the mind, the love of knowledge for its own sake with no useful object, analysed by Jansenius as the greatest of three sinful passions.

"From this," said Jansenius, "have come the circus and the amphitheatre, and all the vanity of tragedies and comedies ; thence also comes the search into secrets of nature which do not concern us, which it is useless to understand, and which men wish to know only that they may know them." [3]

Throughout the years of penitence and striving after the annihilation of earthly pride and vainglory, how many times during sleepless nights had not the Devil appeared to Le Maitre and whispered in his ear some point of eloquence, some argument to be used in one of those pleadings in which he had

[1] Mlle. de Montpensier, *Mémoires*, vol. iii. p. 71.

[2] See *Supplément au Nécrologe*, p. 258, for Le Maitre's letter on the subject to Mère Agnès.

[3] *De la Réformation de l'Homme Intérieur*, translated by M. d'Andilly.

once taken unique delight. Going back again to his solitude after the trial with Arnauld, he turned his face more resolutely than ever toward Heaven, crucifying the last echoes of his worldly ambition by a pilgrimage to Clairvaux and the shrine of his patron, Saint Bernard, who also had fought the battle of the soul in a wild solitude, and whose personality was no less fiery and impulsive than his own. Fortunately, the unconquered Solitaire did not have to endure these struggles much longer, for on the 4th November 1658 he passed away.[1]

In composing the epitaph of Port-Royal's first Solitaire, M. Hamon emphasized especially his virtuous renunciation of the greatest gift God had given him—that of eloquence, which he replaced by the "humility of silence," and yet which, never drying up in his breast, was generously used whenever needed for the good of the community he loved.[2]

On hearing of his death, Gomberville exclaimed:

"The great orator of the French tongue is now speaking the language of angels."[3]

Anne of Austria's truce lasted four years, and at the end of the time, Mazarin's so long apparent indifference to religious controversy was explained by the successful issue of negotiations he had been carrying on. The wedding of the young Louis XIV to the Infanta of Spain, Marie-Thérèse, marked the climax of the great minister's political career, and for a time banished all other preoccupations from the mind of France. On the 20th August 1660, amidst beating of drums and rejoicings of every kind, the imposing entrance of the new Queen into Paris took place. Amongst those looking on at the ceremony from the balcony of the Hôtel de Beauvais at the Porte St. Antoine was the woman who was later to have so fatal an effect on Port-Royal—Madame Scarron, wife of the deformed and bitter poet of the Fronde, and the future Madame de Maintenon.

Alone of all the world about them, the Solitaires and nuns of Port-Royal were taking little account of the feastings and rejoicings, the magnificence and gilded pomp. Their pupil, Du Fossé, had in the enthusiasm of youth been curious enough to view the pageant. When, after witnessing the

[1] For Le Maitre's last days, see Du Fossé, *Mémoires*, ii. pp. 16, 17.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 25. [3] *Nécrologe*, p. 419.

grand entrance of the Queen, and the twelve hours' progress of the royal procession throughout Paris, he returned to the solitude of Les Trous, the first person he met was De Saci. In the midst of the quiet fields, this gentleman was pursuing his daily reading of the Scriptures. With his recent enthusiasm still fresh upon him, Du Fossé eagerly began to relate the marvels he had seen, telling of the wonders of decoration, the majesty of Louis XIV, the beauty of the Spanish Infanta, covered with pearls and diamonds and seated in a golden chariot. Closing his book, but keeping his finger in it to mark his place, De Saci, with a touch of very unsuspected humour, said :

" Is that all ? I had imagined diamonds larger than the towers of Notre-Dame ! "

Then, opening his book again, he continued his reading of the wonders of the New Jerusalem, where the gates were of jasper, ornamented with precious stones, the streets of gold. Before such a description, the wonders of the Porte St. Antoine, with its gilded paper statues, paled indeed.[1]

It was in the very year of Louis XIV's marriage that persecution boldly advanced again from its temporary retirement. Hardly had the young King's wedding bells ceased ringing, before the Lieutenant Civil d'Aubray was on his way to Trous to work his devastating dispersion of the last remnant of the Petites Écoles. Accompanied by the *Procureur du Roi au Châtelet*, three commissaries, and a police officer, he visited Chesnai also, and ordered that strangers leave there within twenty-four hours. Among these was M. de Bernières, forbidden from henceforth ever to put his house to a like purpose, and exiled to Issoudun.

One night soon after this, a nun at Port-Royal de Paris had a strange dream. Feeling that a great peril was menacing her, and looking toward heaven, she saw in the south a thick cloud, and in this cloud a terrible beast, which seemed to be covered with smoke and of an extraordinary blackness. Its feet were bound, and it was making the most horrible groans, moving and tormenting itself as if in impatience to be liberated. It seemed to her, then, that some one, she could not see whom, came to take off its bonds, whereupon

[1] Du Fossé, *Mémoires*, vol. ii. p. 54.

the roaring beast took its course directly for the monastery. Assembled in the courtyard of the cloister, the nuns were tremblingly waiting to see what the horrible monster would do. With eyes lifted to heaven, they implored the succour of God. Finally, after many roars around the walls, the beast suddenly turned and advanced toward the Louvre, then again retracing its steps, came furiously onward. All at once, it stopped as if it had encountered some insurmountable obstacle in its path; when, bending its head, full of shame and confusion, it returned in silence to the place whence it had issued.[1]

Shortly afterward, the King, calling to the Louvre the heads of the Assembly still sitting in Paris, announced to them his desire for the entire extermination of the Jansenists. Three reasons, he said, caused this decision: "his honour, his conscience, and the good of his State."

"Tell me," he continued, "what must I do to best compass my determination?"

The immediate cause of the King's enmity was the receipt of a letter asking lenience toward the Port-Royalists, evidently inspired by either Arnauld or his friends, but signed by Cardinal Retz.[2] Louis XIV had a most unpleasant recollection of the Fronde, and the very name of Retz angered him. He particularly resented the loyalty of the Jansensists to their Cardinal. A stranger visiting Paris at this epoch wrote with a singularly keen view of the situation:

"The reason that the Jansenists are in disgrace is that they are strong friends of Cardinal Retz, and that it is thought they are a faction of his in the State."[3]

Deliberating on the question, the Assembly, making a resolution of their own to "exterminate and banish very far from France the dogmas of Jansenius," decided that the best way to ensure the purpose of the King was to have the Formulary signed not only by the ecclesiastics of France, but by all nuns and monks, regents and principals of colleges throughout the land.[4]

Fifteen days after this decision, Mazarin died, and, to the

[1] *Histoire des Persécutions des Religieuses de Port-Royal*, pp. 1 and 2.
[2] See Hermant, *Mémoires*, vol. iii. p. 162.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.* iv. p. 509.

astonishment of the world, Louis XIV declared himself Master of France! At first, the defenders of Jansenius were hopeful that this meant a favourable change in their affairs, but when they saw the persons appointed by the King as his "Counsel of Conscience," Père de Marca and Père Annat, they felt that, with this increased power to their enemies, the enforcement of the Formulary was but a pretext for inevitable persecution to the death.[1]

[1] Racine, *Abrégé*, p. 117.

CHAPTER VI

PERSECUTION—DEATH OF MÈRE ANGÉLIQUE

"Votre heure est venue—voici la puissance des ténèbres"

MÈRE ANGÉLIQUE had spent the winter of 1660–61 at the Champs, where, unable to recover from a severe illness, she continued to be in a state of great languor and feebleness. She had long foreseen the coming troubles, and exhorted the nuns to be ready for any emergency. Finally, on rumour of imminent disaster, she herself, in spite of her seventy years, her infirmities, and sufferings, determined in April to set out for the post of danger. As she got into the carriage which was to take her to Paris, bidding M. d'Andilly adieu, she said:

"Good-bye, my brother; be of good courage whatever happens."

"My sister, fear nothing, I am full of courage," replied the Solitaire, somewhat pompously.

"Oh, my brother," exclaimed Mère Angélique, "let us be humble. Let us remember that humility without firmness is cowardice, but that courage without humility is presumption." [1]

While on her journey, news was brought to Mère Angélique that the Lieutenant Civil had himself visited Port-Royal de Paris the day before, with the King's Order that pupils, postulants, and novices must leave both monasteries, and that the nuns were forbidden from thenceforth to receive any prospective nuns or pupils. Stopping short on the road, with the sisters who accompanied her, Mère Angélique at once began to sing the Te Deum, saying that one must thank God at all and every season. On her arrival in the Rue de la

[1] *Mémoires et Relations*, p. 263.

Bourbe, finding some of the nuns weeping, she exclaimed in the same spirit :

" What, my daughters ! Where is your faith ? "

Notwithstanding this courage, on seeing the next day the poor girls turned out of the monastery, she was almost overcome, especially when two novices whom she had reared from childhood came to ask her blessing.

And indeed the distress and sorrow of these girls touched even the rude soldiers sent to tear them away from the nuns they loved so devotedly.

" One would have had to possess the heart of a tiger," wrote Arnauld, " not to be touched by the tears of the poor children, who threw themselves at the feet of the nuns, begging them not to let them be taken away." [1]

From the moment of the Lieutenant Civil's first visit to Port-Royal de Paris, the work of persecution went relentlessly on. Mère Agnès added to the King's displeasure by giving the veil, after his order had arrived, to seven novices. On hearing of her action, the King at once sent a command that the habits of the novices be removed, and that they depart within twenty-four hours.[2]

In May, Singlin, beloved Superior of Port-Royal de Paris, to escape a *lettre de cachet* exiling him to Brittany, was obliged to flee from the monastery into hiding. The new Superior, M. Bail, appointed by the Grand Vicars of Paris, was not an ill-intentioned man, but so prejudiced, says Racine, that

" At the mention of Port-Royal his very hair stood on end." [3]

One of his first acts was to send away all Jansenist confessors, and

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iv. p. 118. In May of the same year, M. Hermant, writing to the Marquise de Crèvecœur at Port-Royal, spoke also of the " tigers," as those must have been to so treat the nuns ; but he dwelt on the consolation which was afforded by the constancy of the sisters under all their misfortunes (*Mémoires*, Hermant (Gazier), vol. iv. p. 665).

[2] Racine relates that these seven novices, on returning to their homes, could never be persuaded to give up their nun's garb. " They wore it for three years, always awaiting the time when it would please God to reopen the doors of a house to which they realized their salvation was attached " (*Abrégé*, p. 126).

[3] *Ibid.* p. 127.

this measure was followed by another visit from the Lieutenant Civil. At the early hour of half-past six in the morning, the officials knocked at the door of Madame de Sablé's apartments, their purpose being to discover a suspected exit at the back of the establishment. The Marquise was still in bed, but they had her rudely awakened, and after searching her rooms, continued their visit to M. de Sévigné, Mlle. Gadeau, and Mlle. d'Atre, also lodging in the court. As Madame de Guéméné was absent, they returned in a day or two to search her apartment, sealing up all the doors leading to the court—especially that of Madame de Sablé—and ordering the outside walls heightened. Writing to Madame de Sablé with regard to this occurrence, Mlle. de Vertus condoned with her friend that there was not a man of quality among the "Council of Conscience," as she called it.[1]

At last M. de Contes, Dean of Notre-Dame, and one of the Grand Vicars of Paris, concerted with some of the *Messieurs* in drawing up a sort of compromise, whereby the nuns might sign the Formulary without actually discrediting themselves. This compromise was called the First *Mandement*, and Pascal is said to have had a hand in its composition. On the 23rd June 1661, all the Paris nuns signed this amended Formulary.

While these events were going on, for two or three months the Champs was left in peace. But as soon as the signature had been accomplished in Paris, attention was turned to the country. It was said that just before the Lieutenant Civil reached the monastery there, a large oak was struck by lightning, and its branches broken into a thousand pieces, leaving the naked trunk standing alone. The nuns regarded this as a presage, and in reality it seems that, remaining without branch or foliage for four years, when the Peace of the Church came, the tree again put forth bud and blossom.

It was in July that the lightning broke upon Port-Royal des Champs in the shape of a visit from M. Bail, attended by M. de Contes. Remaining two months, before the two Vicars left all at the Champs had signed the amended Formulary.

These scenes at Port-Royal de Paris and at the Champs, long letters to her nuns in the country, interviews and consultations, processions in which she took part, various duties

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iv. p. 134.

in the monastery—where she was the head and the comfort—were at last too much for even Mère Angélique's iron will. One day she joined in a procession made for the purpose of asking God to grant the prayers of the seven dismissed novices that they might remain at Port-Royal. Holding a relic of the true Cross in her hands, and with bare feet, the heroic nun trailed her unwilling body the length of the cloisters, but on returning to the choir she fell down in weakness, and had to be taken to her bed, from which she was never again to rise. For two months she languished in great pain of body, and, strange to say, suffering of mind, for the fear of the Supreme Mystery had come to torture her soul with a last test.

The idea of Death had always been abhorrent to Mère Angélique. According to her conception of the mystery, she could not comprehend how a Christian with faith could think of, or occupy himself with, anything else all his life than the remembrance that he had to die, and preparation for that terrible hour. Like Le Maitre, she too feared her Judge, and confessed that she felt as might a criminal awaiting sentence at the foot of the scaffold.[1]

While she was lying in this state, news came that the King was not contented with the *Mandement*, so the dying Mère Angélique was persuaded to write a last appeal to the Queen Mother on the ground that Her Majesty had always had such a regard for M. d'Andilly. In this letter, recapitulating the entire history of the monastery, its trials, its miracles, the calumnies against it, the good mother begged Anne of Austria to accord it her protection. Philip II of Spain, she reminded the Queen, had given his to Sainte-Thérèse, who with the Fathers of her Order had in like manner been calumniated before the Pope by similar accusations of heresy.[2]

Finishing this letter in the midst of convulsions and agony, she then refused to concern herself more with the affairs of this world. Death had now lost its terror, and, as she said to those around her, she was in a complete solitude and separation from all things earthly, occupied solely with the Heavenly Vision. Lying on her bed with her eyes raised to Heaven, she opened her lips only to address short impassioned words to God, and to recite passages from the Psalms and other parts of Scripture. Finally, on the Day of the Transfiguration, 6th August 1661,

[1] *Mémoires et Relations*, p. 266. [2] Du Fossé, *Mémoires*, ii. p. 72.

she passed away quietly, thanking God that she died in poverty of terrestrial goods. Her last words were :

" O Jesus ! O Jesus, Thou art my God, Thou art my justice, Thou art my force, Thou art my all ! " [1]

The next day, her body being exposed in the church according to custom, such crowds of people came to touch the body of the revered " Mother of the Poor," as they called her, with their rosaries and missals, that until her interment two sisters did nothing else than receive and return these articles.

To Port-Royal de Paris was entrusted the remains of this " fille véritablement illustre et digne, la plus belle, la plus pure, la plus sainte, des figures de Port-Royal." [2]

She was interred in the entrance to the Nuns' Choir, and there her ashes still remain. Piles of linen hide her tomb, no longer in a part of the church, but separated, and in an enclosure used by the Maternity Hospital as a laundry. Her name is seldom noticed by the humble workers who surround her, and thus at last she has realized the lifelong endeavour of her penitence to remain in the silence and in the shadow.[3]

Mère Angélique's death was followed three months later by that of " the first victim of the Formulary "—Jacqueline Pascal. This sensitively conscientious Mistress of Novices and Sub-prioress of Port-Royal des Champs had been through the humiliation of the Interrogatory of Messrs. Bail and Contes, and had been staunch in her defence of truth. In a letter to Mère Angélique de St. Jean on the signature of the Formulary, she had said :

" If it is not for us to defend the truth, it is for us to die for the truth "—

a premonition of what was to happen to her. In her Mémoires on the affairs of her own family and Port-Royal, Marguérite Pèrier sums up in a few words the cause of her aunt's death :

" My aunt was there (at Port-Royal des Champs) when they were ordered to send away the novices and postulants,

[1] *Mémoires et Relations*, p. 293. [2] *Nécrologe de Port-Royal.*

[3] Among her last instructions was the following : " I beg that I be interred in the courtyard, and that after my death little foolery be made."

" The best part of persecution," she wrote, " is humiliation, and humility is preserved by silence. Guard it, then, at the feet of Jesus Christ, and expect your support from His bounty."

at the beginning of the persecution of the nuns for the signature of the Formulary. This latter afflicted her so sensibly that she said and wrote to several people that she knew she would die because of it,—and this indeed happened, the 4th of October 1661." [1]

The short but significant history of this woman of thirty-six, a being whom Nature had endowed rarely, but who had elected to allow the rich fountain of her enthusiasm to be pent up within the walls of a convent, and had fallen a martyr to her idea of a duty betrayed, brings up a question which, continually recurring to the human mind, is never answered satisfactorily : that is, the utility of self-immolation in the religious life. There are two opposed courses through the world : the straight and narrow path, and the broad road. The first is represented in philosophy by Stoicism, the second by Epicureanism. Port-Royal portrays, says M. Cousin, the stoical study of the problem of human life, while Jacqueline Pascal was the extreme of even the Port-Royal morality, her whole life, instead of being a gloriously worked-out progression, the beginning of a triumphant march through all phases of being up to the eternal existence in God, was in reality only a death in life—refusal to accept the vital joy which would have been hers for the taking. This is a broad criticism, and one which has its exceptions, as in the case of Mère Angélique and Mère Agnès. Their example and influence reached out into the mass and body of their fellow-creatures,[2] their interest in the world about them being comparatively warm and human. Jacqueline too lived " in humility and silence," and died from remorse at a lapse of conscience.

[1] Cousin, *Jacqueline Pascal*, p. 80.

[2] We have a confirmation of this in the epitaph contained in the *Nécrologe*, i. p. 312, which speaks of Mère Angélique as a " Cœur fidèle à son époux, et capable par son étendue de comprendre non seulement un monastère, mais l'Eglise entière . . . tout ce qu'elle a fait, est cependant moindre que ce qu'elle a été."

CHAPTER VII

THE CULMINATION OF PASCAL'S RELIGIOUS LIFE

" Toute notre dignité consiste donc en la pensée. C'est de là qu'il faut nous relever, non de l'espace et de la durée, que nous ne saurons remplir. Travaillons donc à bien penser ; Voilà le principe de la morale."—PASCAL, *Pensées*

ON hearing the news of his sister's courageous and pious death, Blaise Pascal gave an incontestable proof of Gilberte's assertion that, although he had an extreme tenderness for his family, his feeling did not go as far as " attachment." His only comment was :

" May God give us grace to die as well ! "

And when Gilberte showed her sorrow at their loss, he rebuked her, saying :

" Do not grieve over the death of the Just." [1]

Since his conversion and consequent religious austerities, Pascal's health, if not improved, had at least been kept more under his control : he seemed to be able to rise above it, and to carry the burden of the flesh cheerfully and joyfully. He never did or thought anything by halves. Thus, in going into religion, the zealot in him established two rules to which thereafter he rigidly adhered : the renouncing of pleasure and the casting off of superfluities. Beyond the employment of a cook and some one to run errands and do unavoidable things, he curtailed to a minimum the ministrations of those about him ; his room was shorn of hangings ; his whole time consumed in prayer and the reading of the Bible, in which he took extraordinary pleasure, and which he said was not a science of the mind but of the heart, intellig-

[1] Madame Périer, *Vie de Pascal*.

ible only to the upright.[1] His sister Gilberte relates that he wore an iron belt with sharp points round his waist, and when any thought of vanity, pleasure or attachment came to him, he would strike himself roughly with his elbow to make the points dig still farther into his flesh. This practice he continued throughout his life, even though at the last his maladies grew so acute that he could no longer either read or write. Being thus reduced to spending his days without occupation, the iron belt was more than ever needed, he said, to keep him strong in his views of salvation.

His new love for the science of religion had apparently swallowed up the former devotion to the mathematical sciences, but it is human to read that when tortured by pain he again resorted to his old genius. During sleepless hours entailed by a cruel toothache, there occurred to his mind, quite unexpectedly, some thoughts on the subject of the *roulette* or cycloid, and in less than eight days, in the midst of the most intense suffering, he found a method which solved problems with regard to this geometrical curve which Roberval and Torricelli had begun but had not finished. Complicated and limited under the treatment of these men, in Pascal's hand this method became general and uniform.[2]

This digression of the hours of suffering seems to have been Pascal's only return to his former pursuits, and, writing to Fermat two years before his death, he confessed that although he found geometry the highest exercise of the mind, at the same time he recognized it to be so useless in the nobler science of the heart and soul, that he would not differentiate between a skilled geometrician and a simple artisan.[3]

Unfortunately it was not long before Pascal's health began to be so much worse that books and writing were interdicted, and he was forbidden any work. Everybody about him endeavoured to follow out this prohibition by entertaining the sick man with things that required no application or concentration. Although they could keep books from him, and prevent him from doing actual labour, it was impossible to hinder his active mind from producing. Sometimes he had the

[1] Madame Périer, *Vie de Pascal*, p. 43.

[2] Essay on Pascal's scientific works, by Bossut, *Pensées*, ed. Louandre, p. 91.

[3] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iii. p. 318.

strength, when these ideas occurred to him, to sit down at once and develop them; at other times, both the energy and the power to exert his brain were lacking. Being fully conscious—saddest thought of all—that his memory in its present state was no longer retentive, and not wishing to lose these conceptions, he adopted the method of noting his reflections as they came to him on the first piece of paper at hand, indifferent whether with pen or pencil, often during his walks even writing on his nails.[1] For four years this continued—the moment never arrived when the suffering thinker could bring himself to the task of marshalling his thought forms into order and sequence, so that, when finally Death came, it found the *Pensées* a voluminous bundle of notes, unarranged, unassorted, and incomplete.

One of the last acts of his life shows most graphically the change in him, and illustrates the sincerity of the *Pensées*, After the revocation of the First *Mandement*, the learned doctors and confessors of Port-Royal often met together to hold counsel as to how to act in the event of a Second. One day, after many things had been written for and against, a last meeting was called in Pascal's rooms. On one side were Arnauld, Nicole, Sainte-Marthe, and with them most of the party. On the other, Domat, Roannès, Périer, and Pascal. Each man expressed his opinion, but Blaise Pascal, who had supported the effort at a settlement which had resulted in the signing of the First *Mandement* with the amendment affixed to it, was now found to differ absolutely. He had made his last compromise. Earnestly he expressed his opinion that in conscience they could not sign, for to do so, he said, would be to tacitly condemn the *Efficacious Grace* of God, which was the corner-stone of the faith of Jansenism.[2] After a long discussion, everybody there sided with Arnauld and Nicole, the two authors of the proposed Second Compromise, against Pascal and his three friends. At that moment a strange thing happened to Pascal. He suddenly fainted away. This broke up the assembly, and when the Périers, Domat, and Roannès were left alone with Pascal, Madame Périer asked her brother the cause of the accident.

"When I saw," said Pascal, "persons whom I had re-

[1] Strowski, *Pascal et son Temps*, vol. iii. p. 220.
[2] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iii. p. 355.

garded as those to whom God had made Truth known, and who should have been its defenders, shaken and giving hands to the fall, I confess that I was seized with such pain that I could not endure it, but had to succumb." [1]

Ill before, from the hour of this meeting in his rooms Pascal's malady grew worse and worse, and in six months he followed his sister Jacqueline, his death, like hers, being undoubtedly hastened by disappointment in Port-Royal. Two months before the end, leaving his own house, he went to live with Madame Périer. This move was occasioned by the illness of the child of his housekeeper with the smallpox. As Madame Périer had little children, she naturally could not run the risk of visiting her brother under the circumstances. Rather than disturb the sick child, Blaise inconvenienced himself, saying:

"There is less danger for me in this change of habitation, therefore it is for me to go."

The elder sister, who nursed him so faithfully in his last illness, tells us how the great philosopher and Christian received the final mystery. At the highest point of his agony, a Stoic still, he exclaimed:

"Do not pity me, illness is the natural state of Christians." [2]

How different this from the famous epigram on the *Discours de l'Amour*:

"How happy is the life that begins with love and finishes with ambition! If I had to choose, I would choose that." [3]

After many warnings, death finally came so suddenly that the watchers by his bedside feared he would go without the supreme consolation; but at midnight, at the very moment when they thought he was dying, the Curé of St. Étienne du Mont, who, with M. de Sainte-Marthe had been attending him, entered the sick-room bearing the Sacrament. Half rising in his bed, the dying man received the extreme unction

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iii. p. 356.

[2] Madame Périer, *Vie de Pascal* (Louandre edition of the *Pensées*), p. 69.

[3] Qu'une vie est heureuse quand elle commence par l'amour et qu'elle finit par l'ambition! Si j'avais à en choisir une, je prendrais celle-là."

with so tender a joy that he shed tears, and, blessing the holy pyx, whispered :

" May God never abandon me ! "

It has been said that this great man never belonged to Port-Royal at all, and two years after his death the Archbishop of Paris tried to prove this by the testimony of the Curé of St. Étienne, from whom he extracted a kind of declaration that Pascal had blamed Arnauld and the other Messieurs and retracted his Jansenist sentiments. The Jesuits gladly took hold of this testimony for their own uses, but it was afterwards proved that the Curé had misunderstood Pascal's words. Convinced by the philosopher's family that Pascal was more really akin to St. Cyran and Jansenius than even Arnauld himself, the Curé then withdrew his statements. Only the night before his death, Pascal had confessed to M. de Sainte-Marthe, and during his last illness, not only Arnauld, but Nicole and others of *Ces Messieurs,* had been admitted to his bedside.

Pascal had himself, it is true, denied connection with Port-Royal in one of the Provincial Letters. In reply to Père Annat's challenge to " The Secretary of Port-Royal," he wrote in the 17th Provincial :

" You suppose primarily that he who is writing the Letters is of Port-Royal. . . . Thus I have not great trouble in defending myself of the accusation because I do not belong to it, and I will refer you to my letters, in which I say that *I am alone,* and in proper terms, that I am not at all of Port-Royal."

The first two Provincial Letters were, however, actually written from Port-Royal des Champs. Afterward, when living behind the Sorbonne, the *Secretary of Port-Royal* dined every day with the other exiles.

It is true that in his spirit Pascal differed from the later apostles of Jansenism ; for, while they were essentially theologians, and reasoned from that standpoint, Pascal, on the contrary, was a scientist, and pursued the simple decisive system of geometry, deducing truths from no theoretical point, but from his own experience. He himself had actually undergone that efficacious and sufficient grace of God which made Jansenism a living truth. The blood of Christ had

been shed for the being elected and singled out from among his fellows, and that favoured person was he.

Once aroused, Blaise Pascal had gone to even greater extremes in the rigour of his religious austerities than his sister. And he has been called the "Exaggeration of Port-Royal," [1] as well as of the religious spirit of the seventeenth century. Yet their individual conceptions of religion were very different. Jacqueline was a person of little if any imagination: no picture ever came before her mind to lighten stern reality; and her methods of reflection were, strange to say for a poet —as Blaise himself said—"as brutal as a blow with a stick." Blaise, on the contrary, had an imagination of fire. He seems, therefore, a more human character than his sister, for, while her greatest claim to remembrance was the influence she exerted on her brother, he, even in the scourging of his own flesh, used the tremendous powers of his mind and heart in the defence and promulgation of the truth as he understood it.

And by spiritual fellowship he belonged indubitably to the great souls of Port-Royal: to St. Cyran, Mère Angélique, Singlin. With them he will ever be classed. Yet it was not through the Provincials—however much they defended Port-Royal in the moment of its need—that he approached the monastery. His real connection, like that of Racine, came more surely through the culmination and latest expression of his religious maturity: his *Pensées*. In this work he denies the essence of the Provincials—which is that of fighting the world with its own weapons—and returns to the true spirit of St. Augustine when he wrote:

"Assuredly the laws of language are not written so deeply on our hearts as the rule of conscience: 'Do not to another what thou wouldst not that he should do unto thee.'"

[1] V. Cousin, *Jacqueline Pascal*, p. 339.

CHAPTER VIII

A FORTUNATE RESULT OF THE PERSECUTIONS—INTEREST OF THE DUCHESSE DE LONGUEVILLE

"Vous serez comme des Dieux"

THE silver lining to the heavy cloud hanging over Port Royal in 1662 was the interest which the sufferings of the nuns occasioned in the breast of a distinguished penitent associated with the neighbouring Convent of the Carmélites.

Sister to the Grand Condé, a princess of the blood and cousin to Louis XIV, Anne Geneviève de Bourbon, Duchesse de Longueville, had had a history of unexampled brilliance and sadness combined. Even now her name never evokes the picture of a stern, serious, and repentant sinner, rather that of a young, beautiful, aristocratic, and gracious but indiscreet woman of the world, surrounded by lovers, lights, gaiety, music, and voluptuousness. Yet nearly half of her life was spent, as the epitaph written on her tomb in the Church of St. Jacques du Haut Pas testifies:

"detached from all things of the earth, and from life itself; and completely occupied with thoughts of eternity."

What a history hers of love and war and heroic deeds!

Her father, Henri II de Bourbon, Prince de Condé, was that same cousin of Henry IV, husband of Charlotte de Montmorency, who had flown with his bride to Brussels out of reach of the amorous King. On Henry IV's assassination, the Prince, considered by some as the rightful heir to the throne, was tempted to usurp the kingdom, but, sailing over from Holland with his adherents, he found in France not a crown, but arrest and imprisonment. On the 28th August

1619, Anne Geneviève was born within the austere walls of her father's prison at Vincennes. Two months afterward, Louis XIII restored to the Prince de Condé not only his sword and his liberty, but his princely rank and ancestral estates.

The early life of Mlle. de Bourbon was spent in the Hôtel de Condé at Paris, an immense palace which occupied the site of the present Odéon. The Princesse de Condé, her mother, while fond of admiration, was also very religious, and it was her custom to make frequent visits to the Convent of the Carmélites. From her earliest years the little Anne accompanied her mother on these visits. Piety was therefore her first passion. She loved the nuns, and for a time religion became so real to her that it obscured comprehension of any other emotion. At thirteen, absolutely ignorant of the world and her own nature, she announced her desire to enter the convent of the Carmélites as a nun.

But Madame la Princesse, however religiously disposed herself, could not conscientiously allow her young daughter to carry out such evident fanaticism. Instead of the convent, therefore, Mlle. de Bourbon was told that by decree of both parents she was to enter society. Hitherto the slightest social duties had bored her inexpressibly, yet when her mother questioned her concerning her indifference she had been politic enough to reply :

"You, Madame, have such touching graces, that as I only go about with you, and appear after you, one finds none in me." [1]

On learning that she must now make her formal entrance into society, the young Princess went to consult her dear Carmélites as to what to do. They counselled her to obey her parents, so, making a compromise with her conscience by putting a *cilice* underneath her lovely gown and sparkling jewels, Anne Geneviève made ready for her début at the famous ball given by Louis XIII at the Louvre. From the moment Mlle. de Bourbon entered the ballroom that night of the 18th February 1635 a wave of admiration passed through the assembled multitude of courtiers, and instantly she was surrounded by the handsomest and most distinguished

[1] Villefore, *Vie de Madame la Duchesse de Longueville*, p. 13.

of the land. Heaped with adulation and flattery, the subtle poison sank so quickly into the heart beating under the *cilice*, that on leaving the scene of her triumph its owner sought in vain in her soul for her former distaste of society. It had vanished, as from that hour disappeared also her deep religious desire to become a nun. Although she still continued to visit the good Carmélites from time to time, and corresponded with them all her life, she soon forgot the language of piety, and was dumb in their presence. She had descended from heaven to earth, drawing down with her the ladder by which she had ascended.

Madame de Motteville describes her beauty with the pen of an enthusiast.[1] It consisted essentially in a certain incomparable charm of complexion, that "tint of pearl" for which she became renowned. Her eyes were blue, sweet and brilliant; her hair silver blonde and like an aureole round her head. All this, added to an air of perfect distinction, gave her an irresistible allurement felt by men and women alike.

It so happened that Mademoiselle de Bourbon's entrance into society coincided with her eldest brother's return from the Jesuit College at Bourges, where he had been finishing his education. With admiration and affection the young Duc d'Enghien, afterward famous as the Great Condé, made firm friends with Anne, accompanying her and his mother to the Hôtel de Rambouillet, then at the very zenith of its vogue and brilliancy. Here brother and sister both shone by their attainments. Queen of all activities, discussions, intrigues, around the blonde aureole of the Princess revolved popularity, fortune, honour.

Popular in a less précieux manner than his sister, the Duc d'Enghien did not spend his time sighing and making compliments, but in laughing with Voiture and the other wits, and in admiring Corneille. Early in his career he had adopted "Noblesse oblige" as his device, and had learned to subdue his own inclinations to the obligations imposed upon him by his birth and rank. Thus, in 1641, he obeyed the command of his father, and, breaking with the woman he really loved, for ambition's sake, he married the young and awkward Mlle. de Brézé, niece of the powerful Richelieu!

[1] *Mémoires*, ii. pp. 14–20.

The year after her brother's marriage, Mlle. de Bourbon was in her turn made the victim of an ill-assorted union. At that date Condé, intent only on averting for his sister the fate which he had endured—marriage into the house of Richelieu—hurriedly united her to a gentleman twenty-four years older, a widower with a grown-up daughter of seventeen, but one who had the distinction to be, after the princes of the blood, the greatest gentleman in France—the Duc de Longueville. The wedding was gay and brilliant in the extreme. But from the beginning marriage brought the young bride little happiness. During the first year her beauty was threatened by an attack of smallpox, and all her friends, save only Mlle. de Rambouillet, fled from her side. Singularly enough, the dread disease spared her, and left her more triumphantly beautiful than before. Then scandal was wrongly fixed upon her shoulders by jealousy, and the affair of a falsely attributed love-letter brought into general notice by her relatives demanding public reparation. Some people asserted that hidden behind the windows of the house of the old Duchesse de Rohan in the Place Royale, Madame de Longueville herself was so cold-blooded as to witness the resultant duel. If, indeed, she was looking out of those windows, she saw a sight that must have remained in her memory throughout many sleepless nights, for the Duc de Guise, the champion of Madame de Montbazon, who had started the scandal, killed her own perfectly blameless "martyr," the Comte de Coligny. Nor could the following song which went the rounds of Paris diminish her self-reproach:

"Essuyez vos beaux yeux,
Madame de Longueville,
Essuyez vos beaux yeux.
Coligny se porte mieux
S'il a demandé la vie,
Ne l'en blamez nullement
Car c'est pour être votre amant
Qu'il veut vivre éternellement."[1]

Soon after wedding Mlle. de Bourbon, the Duc de Longueville was sent on a diplomatic mission to Münster, and it was at this period, when left behind in Paris, that Madame de Longueville met the fatal influence of her life, the Prince

[1] Madame de Motteville, *Mémoires*, i. p. 201.

de Marcillac, afterward Duc de la Rochfoucauld. Opinions differ as to the nature of the relationship between the author of the *Maxims* and Madame de Longueville. Yet upon a conception of it depends any real understanding of the life of either. M. Cousin, Madame de Longueville's admiring biographer, almost her lover, two centuries after she had left the flesh, anathematizes La Rochefoucauld as the basest of men,[1] and attributes his so-called love for Madame de Longueville uniquely to a desire to obtain the favour of her brother the Great Condé. Other authors make Madame de Longueville out a cruel Circe, who, after playing on the affections of men, coldly dismissed them from her side. La Rochefoucauld is the witness to his own perfidy, as in his *Mémoires* he confesses that in attaching himself originally to Madame de Longueville he was actuated by desire for revenge against Anne of Austria and Mazarin, whom he had once served, and who were now refusing him advancement.

There seems little doubt that love for La Rochefoucauld precipitated Madame de Longueville into the Fronde—that humorous war of self-seekers, in which the feminine element prevailed, and wherein gallantry ruled women and warriors alike—and that it was for him that she committed all the sins of which she repented during twenty-seven years.[2]

The rest of the story of the two lovers is sordid enough. By 1651, having personally experienced the misery of war in the devastation of his family estates, La Rochefoucauld was tired of the contest, and of his love. Madame de Longueville, on her part, still devoted to him, wished to continue the struggle in order to avoid rejoining her husband. The end was evident and inevitable,—growing coolness on the part of the Duke ; the succumbing to a new excitement on the part of this essentially subjective *intrigeuse*, to whom the pleasing of some one was an ever-present necessity.

Thus when, in 1652, the signing of the Treaty of Ruel brought peace to Paris, it awakened Madame de Longueville to disillusionment and despair. Little by little she had

[1] *Madame de Longueville*, p. 350 (edition 1853).

[2] Her stepdaughter, the Duchesse de Nemours, wrote (*Mémoires*, p. 18): "It was La Rochefoucauld who insinuated to this Princess so many crude and false statements, . . . as he had a very great influence with her, and as he thought only of himself, he made her engage in all the intrigue in which he took part, only in order to accomplish his own interest thereby."

been tasting the dregs of life, her adventurous spirit gradually extinguished, not by failure of plans, not by misfortune, but by the bitterness of love grown cold, of affection proved false and worthless. Through these things she had come to realize how unworthy any human creature is of either love or esteem, and through sorrow learned that to God alone belongs devotion and complete abandonment.[1] In this state of mind she bethought herself of her old friends the nuns. Writing in 1653 from Bordeaux to these dear Carmélites, she wearily confessed her desire to end her days with them, adding that what had brought her to this resolution was the fact that any attachments to the world of any nature whatever she may formerly have had were now all broken and severed.

Under the pressure of this feeling a great desire for penitence now possessed her. It would have been easy to take refuge with the nuns, and to give herself up to the passive virtues connected with conventual life. That she realized another and greater ideal of penance in going back to her husband, her children, and those homely domestic duties connected with the station of wife and mother, demonstrates her intrinsic sincerity and worth. Her actual religious awakening took place in 1654. At Moulins, in the Convent of the *Filles de la Visitation*, where she had gone from her exile after the Fronde to visit her aunt, its Superior, the veil seemed to fall from her eyes, and in her own words :

"I found myself like a person who suddenly awakens from a long sleep in which she has dreamed she was great, happy, honoured, and esteemed, and discovers that she is loaded with chains, pierced with wounds, overcome with languor, and shut up in an obscure prison." [2]

Thus, when shortly afterward the Duc de Longueville came to fetch his wife into his government of Normandy, he found the former imperious Princess become a humble penitent, determined to atone for her sins against God and man.

While living in Normandy during the next few years, Madame de Longueville occasionally came to Paris, and in the meantime exchanged many and frequent letters with Madame de Sablé. It is to the preservation of these more than two hundred

[1] Madame de Motteville, *Mémoires*, iii. p. 472.
[2] Lettre à Mère Agnès aux Carmélites, 11 Juin 1653.

documents, which should have been burned, according to promise, but which were preserved by Madame de Sablé's secretary and confidant, Dr. Valant, that we owe many details of her life.

In 1660, Madame de Sablé wrote reproaching her friend for not coming to see her at Port-Royal, and attributing this omission to the trouble the Jansenists were then having. Madame de Longueville replied :

" All the Jansenism in the world would not have prevented me from going to see you had I been longer in Paris." [1]

In 1661 she wrote again in answer to a similar reproach :

" The disturbance at your house would not keep me from going there if I had had the design. I shall immediately decide upon it. Therefore I shall see you on Wednesday, and we will speak of *this affair*, and of a thousand other things."

" This affair " meant the Jansenist cause. Although for many years Madame de Longueville had had leanings toward Port-Royal, having been one of those impressed with the *Book of the Frequent Communion*, finding in it, as in all the writings and manners of *Ces Messieurs*, a politeness which charmed her,[2] no doubt the talk with Madame de Sablé with regard to the persecution then going on, at the interview above mentioned, was the means of bringing her eventually to Port-Royal.

And it was through Madame de Sablé that shortly afterward the Duchess asked for an interview with Mère Angélique. On seeing the faith and courage of this great saint, her own heroic spirit rose to meet that of the then dying *religieuse*. It is said that her one visit with Mère Angélique accomplished more than Madame de Sablé had been able to effect in months of exhortation : from that moment she was devoted heart and soul to the cause of Port-Royal persecuted.[3] On her

[1] V. Cousin, *Madame de Sablé*, Lettre du 31 Dec. 1660.

[2] Rapin, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 35.

[3] M. Cousin explains this devotion as follows : " It was because in Madame de Longueville, side by side with the angelic sweetness which the unanimous testimony of contemporaries attributes to her, there was a pride which rendered odious to her all tryanny, and inclined her to the side of the oppressed. It was because Port-Royal had for her the attraction of a persecuted cause. . . . She became a Jansenist through generosity, admiration, friendship " (*Madame de Sablé*, p. 223).

part, Mère Angélique was at once enthusiastically sympathetic with Madame de Longueville, and wrote to Madame de Sablé :

" Tout ce que j'ai vu en peu de temps de cette princesse m'a semblé tout d'or fin."

At once, too, Mère Angélique divined the new penitent's need for spiritual direction, and desired for her the guidance of Singlin, her own director. Although the latter was in hiding at the time, through the means of Mère Angélique, who knew his whereabouts, he was induced to consent to visit Madame de Longueville in her house at the Carmélites, and by adopting the disguise of a physician in an enormous wig and dark brown mantle, managed to enter unsuspected.

It did not take the acute healer of souls long to discover his new patient's weak points, but he also found her determined to correct them. Under his direction she wrote a long analysis of her own character, and the faults which had compassed her divergence from the straight path, couched in terms of the greatest candour and humility. She was clear-sighted enough to trace all her misfortunes back to the besetting sin of pride which, she confessed, had made her firm in the belief that her virtue could not be shaken, and induced her to rely on her own character in the conquering of temptation.

" Vous serez comme des Dieux,"

the world had said to her. As she thus reviewed her life, horror of what she had been led her to the very borders of that greatest of all dangers, discouragement. It was Singlin who saved her from this pitfall, by inducing her to divert her mind and heart by doing good to others. He suggested the compensation of those whom during the Fronde she had been instrumental in ruining. This wise counsellor also advised her to devote herself to the education of her children, and to remain in the world with the new ideal of piety and unselfishness.

On M. Singlin's death, in 1664, Madame de Longueville was again thrown into distress, for she was still very dependent on spiritual advice. Her loss was lessened a short time later by a determination to put herself under the direction of M. de Saci.

CHAPTER IX

OTHER WORLDLY SYMPATHIZERS

" Ah ! pour être dévot, je ne suis pas moins homme."
Le Tartuffe, MOLIÈRE

THE Grand Condé was not Madame de Longueville's only brother. Younger than either of them, and in every way a contrast, was Armand de Bourbon, Prince de Conti. This youngest son of the Prince de Condé was a great contrast to his elder brother. While Louis, Duc d'Enghien, afterward the Grand Condé, was tall, handsome, and manly, the Prince de Conti was small, ugly, and effeminate. The one was destined for war and battle, the other for the Church. Both were educated in Jesuit Colleges, both scholarly, the younger surpassing in this respect the elder, for while Condé lost his taste for learning amid the excitement of the bivouac and the attack, Conti fostered his inherent love for letters in the leisure moments which are the luxury of a Prince endowed from an early age with rich ecclesiastical benefices. In addition to the tastes of the scholar, the Prince de Conti possessed other and less worthy inclinations, which led him into extremes of dissipation. Meeting his beautiful sister on her return to Paris just before the Fronde, when he was but nineteen, she ten years older, he fell desperately in love with her,[1] and during the early years of the struggle he blindly followed her lead in all things, even to joining the Frondist party. Afterward, recovering from his infatuation, he abandoned his sister's cause, and made his peace with Mazarin by a marriage with the finest of the great Cardinal's nieces, Anne-Marie de Martinozzi, who, however, at

[1] " Il adorait sa sœur, et elle exerçait sur lui un empire mêlé d'un peu de ridicule, et qui dura plusieurs années " (Cousin, *Madame de Longueville*, p. 324).

seventeen, when he married her, was frankly nothing but "an honest pagan."

Made Governor of Languedoc, the Prince de Conti at length falling ill at his château of Les Granges des Près at Pézénas, Fate ordained that he should be visited by the pious M. Pavillon, Bishop of Aleth, who later on became one of Port-Royal's most faithful allies. Taking advantage of his opportunity, M. Pavillon succeeded in putting the sins of his penitent so graphically before him that the facile heart of the Prince was converted to the truths of religion. Being obliged to devote his time to other things, the Bishop turned the daily direction of his new convert over to M. de Ciron, Chancellor of the University of Toulouse. As Armand de Bourbon's temperament led him to extremes in all things, his penitence followed the characteristics of his years of dissipation. He wished to give up his worldly goods and enter a convent, but this his wise guides would not allow. They counselled him to remain in the world and there to practise charity and justice. Under their guidance he made restitutions of over two millions to the people who had suffered in the Civil wars, and restored the 40,000 livres of income which belonged to the various abbeys with which he had been endowed.[1] The progress of his devotion can be followed in the letters of his wife, the Princess, who also became converted, and who had a real affection for her husband.

The Princess had much to work against in her religious life, but gradually by sincere effort she subdued the inclinations of her passionate nature, and followed her husband's lead in austerities and generous actions. After a second retreat at Aleth, she was so touched by penitence that in the desire to make restitution in the provinces of Berry and Champagne ravaged by famine, she sent all her jewels to Paris to be sold. Fontaine relates[2] that when giving up a very beautiful collar of pearls belonging to this collection, taking it in her hands and gazing at it, she finally heaved a little sigh as reluctantly she put it down again.

[1] During this period of his life the Prince de Conti also devoted himself to literary work, writing on the text of Madame de Sablé's Essay on the Comedy a *Traité de la Comédie et des Spectacles selon la tradition de l'Église*, a very moral pamphlet on the Duty of the Great, etc. etc.

[2] *Mémoires*, ii. p. 471.

For a long time, owing to the later events of the Fronde, Madame de Longueville, naturally resenting her brother's desertion of the cause and his marriage with the niece of Mazarin, had not been friends with the Contis, but three years after her own conversion she and the Prince and his wife were brought together again by their common religious enthusiasm, and Madame de Longueville quickly acquired a great liking for her young and beautiful sister-in-law. In her own sad knowledge of the pitfalls of society, she protected the Princess from accepting a high position at Court, lest a too-evident admiration of the King might react to her disadvantage.[1]

Worn out at last by the excesses of his life and his austerities, the Prince de Conti died in 1666 at the age of thirty-seven. After his death, the two sisters-in-law became more and more drawn to each other in their ardour for Port-Royal, Madame de Longueville interesting the Princesse de Conti in her negotiations for the Peace of the Church. So indefatigable were both ladies in religious matters, that they were ironically called "Les Mères de l'Église."[2] And the souvenir of Anne-Marie de Martinozzi, Princesse de Conti, fills one with a feeling of tender interest and regret. Though there were many worldly friends of Port-Royal more fervent and serious than she, her devotion to the cause was strong and unshakable, her piety so mixed with human weakness and caprice that it loses for unregenerate souls the awe with which *dévotes* more strictly Port-Royal in their expression inspire.

It seems strange that Madame de Sévigné, who so rapturously admired the great souls of Port-Royal, and aspired after their goodness, never actually became a *dévote*. Her life, nevertheless, was human, kind, and generous; she spoke ill of no one, and if she led nobody toward Heaven, she certainly made earth happier for many. Even Mère Agnès in her prison longed to see the bright face and hear the cheering words of this most human of contemporary great ladies. Going one day to the Convent of the Visitation, where Mère Agnès was kept a prisoner, and asking to see the saintly nun, Madame

[1] V. Cousin, *Madame de Sablé*, p. 413.

[2] "C'est ainsi que j'appelle les Princesses de Conti et de Longueville," confessed Madame de Sévigné in a letter dated 13th March 1671, and written to her daughter.

de Sévigné was refused admission. Writing afterward to the Chevalier de Sévigné, Mère Agnès said :

" I should have lost much of the fruit of my solitude if I had had the honour to see Madame de Sévigné, for one person like her takes the place of a whole company." [1]

Madame de Sévigné must, therefore, be classed as one of the most illustrious of Port-Royal's worldly sympathizers. She confessed to her daughter that one of her greatest desires was to become a *dévote*, but that, neither God's nor the Devil's, she belonged to the lukewarm, whom God hates.[2]

Yet M. Feuillet de Conches, in his *Causeries d'un Curieux*, tells us that in the Marquise's varied library the corner of honour was consecrated to books of devotion.

" All Port-Royal shone there," he said.

" Il ne vient de là que de parfait,"[3] was Madame de Sévigné's own verdict respecting the literary side of Port-Royal, which interested her more than the religious one.[4]

Her first visit to Port-Royal des Champs was made famous by the much-quoted eulogy of the monastery and its inhabitants. After spending six hours in the Desert with M. d'Andilly, she wrote on her return :

" This Port-Royal is a Thébaïde ; it is a paradise ; a desert where all the devotion of Christianity is concentrated ; there is a saintliness spread about in all the country for a league around . . . the nuns are angels on earth. . . .

" I assure you that I was ravished to see this divine solitude of which I have heard so much. It is a fearful valley quite adapted to inspire the taste to make one's salvation." [5]

The person who brought Madame de Sévigné most nearly into personal contact with Port-Royal was her husband's uncle, the Chevalier de Sévigné. After his wife's death, and just before the persecutions began, this Knight of Malta, former aide-de-camp to Retz, and leader in the battle called " The First of Corinthians," joined the Monastery in Paris as Solitaire. On first going there, he retained his luxuries,

[1] Lettre du 9 Septembre 1664. [2] See letter of 10th June 1671.

[3] Vol. i. p. 87.

[4] Lettre du 30 Sept. 1671. " Ah ! " she exclaimed, " Je n'ai jamais vu écrire comme ces Messieurs là."

[5] Lettre du Janvier 1674.

his silver plate, his carriage. Gradually, he gave these things up, donating every superfluity to the service of the monastery. We have a graphic picture of this gentleman of the old school during his daily promenades in the Garden of the Capuchins opposite Port-Royal. There, walking under a great parasol to protect him from the sun, he presented so comical a figure that the children of the quarter used to pursue him with hues and cries. Annoyed at this, the former soldier asked his Confessor if he might not have a domestic give them a few blows with a stick.

At fifty-seven the Chevalier began to study Latin, learning enough to understand the prayers and offices of the Church, as well as some of the works of St. Augustine and St. Bernard, and occupying himself with transcribing the translations of De Saci. He loved the nuns of Port-Royal tenderly, and made them continual donations and presents. When they were sent away from Port-Royal de Paris, he too left, and on the Peace of the Church he retired to Port-Royal des Champs, where he helped to rebuild the cloister and enlarge the refectory. Although perfectly aware that outsiders were not allowed to go into the cloisters, he could not avoid letting Mère Agnès see his very natural desire to have a glimpse of the place he had been instrumental in erecting, so the latter in her own peculiar fashion was obliged to remind him of the strict rules of seclusion which prevented such a thing, concluding,

"At our door there is a Cherubim, who defends the entrance with a sword of fire." [1]

The Chevalier had therefore to content himself on those rare festivals when in procession behind the ecclesiastics he with the other friends was allowed to follow in the round, with only an occasional glimpse of the forbidden land. Still, the nuns greatly appreciated the sincere devotion and generosity of M. de Sévigné, and treasured this their true friend all the more tenderly in consideration of the numerous enemies who surrounded them. He was, in fact, the *Chevalier d'Honneur* of the Monastery.

The most constant friend and associate of Madame de Longueville in her religious life was a certain Mlle. de Vertus,

[1] Lettre du 15 Sept. 1669.

also a *dévote*, and credited in concert with Madame de Sablé with having accomplished the final link between Madame de Longueville and Port-Royal. Claiming kinship with no less a person than Anne of Brittany, her father being Claude de Bretagne, Comte de Vertus, Mlle. de Vertus proudly signed her own name "Catherine de Bretagne."

Françoise Catherine de Vertus had the misfortune at the age of twenty—being one of a family of six daughters, of whom, after the famous Madame de Montbazon, she was the most beautiful—, on her father's death, to be neglected by a very *galante* mother,[1] and forced to depend for her support on rich relatives. She therefore lived first in one great house, then in another, in the quality of poor relation. She was fortunate in securing the friendship of Madame de Longueville, and after the latter's conversion the Hôtel de Longueville became her home, her material support being due thenceforth mainly to this friend, a pension granted her by Mazarin through the efforts of Madame de Montausier[2] being usually appropriated by unscrupulous agents before it reached her hands. Under these galling circumstances of poverty and dependence, calumny had not spared Mlle. de Vertus. It had even linked her name with that of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld as well as with the Prince de Conti. But, as Tallemant des Réaux praises her unreservedly,[3] it is reasonable to believe that these reports were all false.

At the time of Madame de Longueville's conversion, Mlle. de Vertus had not yet entered Port-Royal, but as Singlin was her Director, it was she who managed the first interview between him and the new convert.[4] With the exception of Madame de Longueville, it was said that no one contributed more toward the bringing the negotiations for the Peace of the Church to a conclusion than Mlle. de Vertus, after which she was at last able to retire definitely to Port-Royal des Champs. On doing so, however, the impaired state of her health would not permit her to become a nun. She had to content herself,

[1] Tallemant said: "Madame la Comtesse fut si ingrate que de ne lui rien donner" (*Historiettes*, vi. p. 123).

[2] V. Cousin, *Madame de Sablé*, p. 343.

[3] "Elle a du mérite, elle sait le Latin . . . elle écrit fort raisonnablement . . . mais l'affaire de M. de la Rochefoucauld l'a fort décriée" (*Historiettes*, vol. vi. p. 123).

[4] Cousin, *Madame de Sablé*, p. 367.

therefore, with taking the habit of a novice, and practising severe austerities, coupled with the most complete humility.

To the outside world, Mlle. de Vertus seemed a model of virtue and attractiveness, and it was whispered that Madame de Longueville was sometimes jealous of her friend as more equable in temper and latterly more seductive than herself.[1] The character of the poorer noblewoman had reason to be more poised than that of the proud Princess, having been longer tried in the fire of adversity. She, however, vaguely alluded to tremendous sins in her youth, although she did not reveal their nature. On entering Port-Royal, she averred that she dared not hope for other suffering than her sins merited.[2]

It was strange how this fragile being held on to life, while others of infinitely stronger physique passed out and left her behind. In spite of constant illness and suffering, she lived eighteen years at Port-Royal des Champs, outliving Madame de Longueville by thirteen. As some one aptly analysed it, she was one of those

"Who are suspended a long time by an imperceptible thread between the danger of dying and that of living." [3]

She feared both states, most of all death, and her Director, Du Guet, had to prepare her soul to meet this terror,[4] even as later on it was he who gave the last consolation to Madame de la Fayette. His advice to Mlle. de Vertus was not a strictly Port-Royal one.

"It is better," he said, "to cede with a little confusion to your infirmity, than to combat it with vexation and without success."

Mlle. de Vertus has her own individual niche in the portrait gallery of the Monastery, and her distinction can be estimated by the fact that Racine himself wrote her epitaph.[5]

One of the crosses of Madame de Longueville's new life was a certain Madame de Saint-Loup, said to be a miniature

[1] *Nécrologe.* [2] Racine, *Abrégé* (Gazier), p. 201.

[3] Sainte-Beuve, v. p. 119.

[4] "Ah!" he said, "you can suffer neither life nor death! How do you wish me to treat you?" (*ibid.*).

[5] *Nécrologe*, p. 438.

Madame de Sablé. This statement, however, seems a libel on the latter, who, although peculiar in the extreme was always aristocratic. Madame de Saint-Loup, on the contrary, was inclined to be vulgar. That she was not quite of Madame de Longueville's world, is proved by a letter from the latter to Madame de Sablé, in which, after explaining that for a number of years she has been in the habit of "measuring" everything with Madame de Saint-Loup, the writer confesses that the lady is not among the number of those friends in whom she has unquestioning confidence.

At Port-Royal, however, they could not afford to consider Madame de Saint-Loup's idiosyncrasies. She was active in inducing her friends of the other sex to make rich donations to the monastery, and she was on terms of Christian fellowship, not only with Du Guet, but with Arnauld, who lived at one time in her house. Nicole, too, was her friend, and took the liberty of admonishing her that the cause of our weakness is more in ourselves than in exterior things.[1]

Her Curé, commenting on the death of this lady at the advanced age of eighty, said:

"She preserved to the end a lively faith, a firm hope in the mercy of God, a true spirit of penitence, a great love for truth, a generous declaration of her respect for the defenders she had had in our century." [2]

One of St. Cyran's own first penitents among these "Ladies of Grace," as Sainte-Beuve called them, was a Madame de Saint-Ange, "one of the most beautiful souls of Port-Royal," and yet almost too tender and affectionate to be of the "pure race," the beauty of her soul being certainly more according to M. Hamon than St. Cyran. From the beginning, the latter had realized her weakness and tried to discipline her to stoicism, writing her from Vincennes:

"Let us think of dying, Madame, while we are living in repose and health."

Strange to say, Madame de Saint-Ange, who became a nun

[1] "J'ai toujours sujet d'en conclure que la cause de notre faiblesse est plus dans nous-mêmes que dans les choses, extérieures, et que nous nous en grossissons l'Idée" (Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iv. p. 483).

[2] Lettre de M. Vuillart à M. de Préfontaine le 4 Déc. 1698.

at Port-Royal under the name of Sister Anne-Eugénie de Boulogne, died just before the Peace of the Church in more tranquillity of soul and less terror of death than Mère Angélique herself.[1]

The Grand Arnauld had many devoted friends among the Ladies of Grace. Apropos of the son of one of these, Madame de Fontpertuis, widow of M. Angran de Fontpertuis, Councillor of the Parliament of Metz, Saint-Simon tells a piquant story showing Louis XIV's dislike for any one tainted with a suspicion of Jansenism, and the obloquy attaching to Madame de Fontpertuis from being the friend of Arnauld. It seems that when in 1708 the Duc d'Orléans was starting for the army of Spain, he named M. de Fontpertuis as one of his followers.

"What! my nephew!" exclaimed the King, knitting his brows, "the son of that Jansenist, that silly woman who used to run after M. Arnauld everywhere! I don't want such a man with you."

"Ma foi, Sire," replied the Duke, "I don't know what the mother did, but as for the son, he is anything but a Jansenist, and I vouch to you for it—for he does not believe in God."

"Then if that is so," said the King, "there is no harm done; you may take him."[2]

In gratitude "to that silly woman," who during his exile had run all dangers to go to him and minister to his needs, who had sweetened his life by her unselfish friendship, Arnauld in his will made Madame de Fontpertuis his universal legatee and the executor of his last wishes.[3]

It was, of course, M. d'Andilly who had the most friends in the world outside the cloister, and of these none were more intimate or closer than a family whose country seat of Fresnes adjoined that of Pomponne—the Du Plessis Guénégauds. In Paris at the Hôtel de Nevers, which had passed from Marie de Gonzague into the hands of the Du Plessis Guénégauds and become their town residence, was usually assembled a brilliant

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iv. p. 318.

[2] *Mémoires* (Hachette), vol. iv. p. 95.

[3] See Arnauld's *Testament Temporel* (*Vie de Messire A. Arnauld*, ii. p. 446). Among the things left to Madame de Fontpertuis were a painting of St. Charles by Champagne, and a large crucifix.

company, not composed exclusively of Port-Royalists, but where one could be sure of hearing all the latest news of Port-Royal. The life of this gathering was the hostess, Madame du Plessis, as Madame de Sévigné called her, a lady of majestic mien and courtly manners, as well as of polished and cultured mind. It was Madame du Plessis Guénégaud who at the request of Port-Royal first induced the *beaux esprits* of Paris to value the *Petites Lettres* of Pascal.[1] She had indeed so great a reputation for intellect, that on one occasion M. de Pomponne naïvely asked Nicole if he thought his sister Mère Angélique de St. Jean, also known to be of keen brain, had as much mind as Madame du Plessis Guénégaud. Nicole merely shrugged his shoulders, evidently in contempt of his interlocutor.[2]

All Port-Royal's mundane friends were ever ready to give material aid to the cause which called forth their enthusiasm. In times of peace they contributed toward the adornment, enlargement, or repair of the monasteries; in seasons of need drew generously upon their influence to advance the interests of the nuns and Solitaires. And, when exile and ignominy attacked Port-Royal, these same people threw open their homes to shelter the persecuted, defending them at the expense of reputation and fortune. Nor at Port-Royal was friendship a mere word;[3] it had there a meaning all its own, and was ever on the lips and in the heart of Mère Angélique, St. Cyran, and Singlin, whose conception of the obligations it involved was handed down from generation to generation. In life, the Port-Royalists gave these faithful ones spiritual direction, and, when Death came, set aside special prayers and Masses to be said with full responses for the repose of their gentle souls, remembering and mourning them unceasingly.

[1] "Elle leur dit qu'ils avoient trop d'esprit pour ne pas sentir eux-mêmes les beautés de ces Lettres . . . que sans examiner si la doctrine de Port-Royal avait été condamnée à Rome ou non, il paraissait qu'elle était préférable à celle des Jésuites par la seule considération de la morale" (Père Rapin, *Mémoires*, ii. p. 375).

[2] Racine, *Abrégé*, p. 204.

[3] Le Maitre gives the Port-Royal ideal in his *Portrait de l'Amitié Chrétienne et Spirituelle* as that of St. Chrysostom. Even Madame de Sablé was infected with the contagion, and wrote her idea of true friendship as being based on reason and virtue.

CHAPTER X

THE VISITS OF THE ARCHBISHOP

" Grace à Dieu, je sais quant à moi
Distinguer le fait de la foi,
Le fait est une chose humaine,
Bien souvent trompeuse, incertaine
Mais la foi n'a rien de douteux
Et l'Église et Rome sont deux."

LORET

A NEW aspect was put on the political affairs of Port-Royal by the resignation of Cardinal Retz. The absent Archbishop having at last[1] been induced in consideration of a pecuniary indemnity to surrender his claim to the Archbishopric of Paris, the King appointed that fierce enemy of the Jansenists, De Marca, Bishop of Toulouse, to the vacant place. Of this man great things were expected by the enemies of Port-Royal, but, fortunately for the latter, M. de Marca died suddenly the very day that his papers arrived from Rome. Soon afterward the following ironical epitaph appeared :

" Ci-git l'illustre De Marca,
Que les plus grand des rois marqua,
Comme prélat de son église :
Mais la mort qui le remarqua,
Et qui se plait à la surprise,
Tout aussitot le démarqua." [2]

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[1] In 1662.

[2] Rough translation :

Here lies De Marca the renowned,
Whom the greatest of kings had crowned,
Of his Church the prelate wise :
But Death whose eye him too had found,
And who was fond of a surprise,
Without delay had him uncrowned.

M. Hardouin de Beaumont de Péréfixe, Bishop of Rhodez and former Preceptor of the King, was at once nominated in M. de Marca's place. Belonging to an ancient family of warriors, M. de Péréfixe had, in spite of his profession, inherited a certain military character. He was very energetic, both in action and manner, his language being at once frank and brusque. In the fire of discussion, he even occasionally allowed an oath to escape him. There was no ambiguity used at Court over his nomination to the Archbishopric of Paris, for on receiving his papers the Queen Mother said to him :

" Recollect on what condition you obtained the Archbishopric. Now you are installed, look to it how you bear yourself." [1]

The " condition " on which the appointment had been given M. de Péréfixe was no less than the enforcement on the nuns of Port-Royal—the only ones of the religious orders who had refused—of the signature of the Formulary. But, a dispute arising between Louis XIV and the Pope, owing to an insult given a French Ambassador at Rome, two years elapsed before the nomination was officially confirmed by the Papal See. During these two years of respite, the nuns and Solitaires had time to draw up papers and regulate their plans for the future, well recognizing the fact that the storm was only averted, that sooner or later the sword of Damocles hanging over their heads would fall. Arnauld, from wherever he happened to be at the moment—and he found it necessary to change his place of retreat from time to time—was deep in negotiations for the termination of the troubles, aided by all the Jansenist circle : Madame de Longueville, Madame de Sablé, Madame de Guéméné, the Liancourts, the Luines, the Du Plessis Guénégauds.

When at last M. de Péréfixe received his *Bulle*, and entered legally into his new functions, his first step was to send a word of warning to the nuns, advising them not to stand out against the King's wish with regard to the Formulary. To Lancelot, who in the name of Port-Royal went to congratulate the new Archbishop on the arrival of his papers, he said in parting :

" It is not proper that a simple convent of women should wish to make a law for others, and to seem either more just

[1] *Histoire des Persécutions*, p. 253.

or more intelligent than the Pope, the Bishops, the Priests, and the Doctors." . . . "Assure the nuns of Port-Royal," he added, "that I esteem their virtue, and that I would give my blood to draw them out of this bad situation." [1]

Seven days after the Archbishop had been confirmed by Rome, Port-Royal sustained an irreparable loss in the death of Singlin. Living hidden in the Faubourg St. Marceau, this last member of the First Port-Royal had finally been worn out at the early age of fifty-seven by his austerities and by grief.

"The thing that pierced his heart was the kind of intestinal war between great servitors of God." [2]

At the last, Singlin had been unpopular with the Solitaires, because of his willingness to sign the Formulary rather than bring trouble and persecution upon the nuns. Even Pascal had reproached him for this attitude, on the ground that not being a theologian he would only mix matters if he attempted to meddle. But the faithful Confessor had the welfare of the nuns too much at heart to be able to refrain from considering what they were to endure, and it broke his heart.

Though forbidden during his lifetime to return to the monastery he loved so well, after death the embargo was removed, and at nine o'clock one night his body arrived at Port-Royal de Paris. With tears and lamentations the nuns buried him in the court, in the same tomb with that part of St. Cyran's remains which had been left to the Paris Church. His heart was sent to Port-Royal des Champs. And now it was discovered that Singlin's influence with the nuns was so great that the very remembrance of his belief with regard to the obnoxious Formulary decided some of them to sign.[3]

Singlin's successor at Port-Royal de Paris, M. de Sainte-Marthe, was of a very different stamp, but soon after M. de Péréfixe's accession he wrote the new Archbishop a letter of

[1] Ch. Gailly de Taurines, *Père et Fille*, p. 157.

[2] "Ce que lui percait le cœur, c'était cette espèce de guerre intestine entre de grands serviteurs de Dieu" (*Mémoire de Mlle. Périer*, Recueil de Plusieurs Pièces, p. 168).

[3] For Singlin's influence on both nuns and Solitaires, see Racine, *Abrégé*, p. 88. Mère Agnès's tribute was expressed in a letter to Madame de Foix (17th May 1664): "His most precious relics are those of his spirit and the practice of instructions given us during twenty-eight years, throughout which he was our only Director, the light, the support, and the consolation of our monastery, as we hope he will always be before God."

a very conciliatory nature, couched in a humble appeal for the nuns:

"Have pity, Monseigneur," it read, "on the tenderness of their consciences, and do not act with rigour." [1]

Without delay the new Prelate issued his *Mandement*, in which, ordering his Deans and Priests to subscribe within a month to the Formulary, ignoring the distinction of *fait* and *droit*, which had occasioned so much trouble, he explained his standpoint to be that of a humane and ecclesiastical faith, zealous only to submit its judgment to that of its superiors.[2] At first thought, the *Mandement* seemed a victory to the Jansenists, who had before offered to sign the Formulary on a like basis—that is, one of respect and obedience to discipline. But alas! the spirit of controversy was now too strong in the minds of this Second Port-Royal for them to recognize when it was wise to cede, so with stubborn recklessness they insisted on precise terms, thus again bringing persecution on their own heads, ignominy and captivity to their sisters the nuns.

M. de Péréfixe soon discovered the mettle of these

"valets de pied de l'armée d'Achab,"

as Angélique de St. Jean d'Andilly called herself and her sisters. On his visit to Port-Royal de Paris to urge the nuns to sign the original Formulary, he had declared himself much pleased with all he saw and heard.[3] This frame of mind changed to that akin to horror when in his first interrogatory he found the kind of adversaries he had to combat in these quiet nuns.

"But," he exclaimed to one of them, "you are wiser than the Pope, the Church, and your Archbishop! In the name of God, my sister, collect yourself, this is an insupportable pride. . . . I find neither humility nor obedience in this house."

In his next visit, the Archbishop was less gentle. Père Annat [4] had spurred him on to definite action. On the nuns refusing to sign anything but the amended Formulary they

[1] Lettre du Juin 1662.

[2] Racine, *Abrégé*, p. 168.

[3] He found nothing to find fault with in them but their refusal to sign the Formulary (*ibid.* p. 170).

[4] "Who," says Racine, "did not cease to reproach him with his too great indulgence" (*Abrégé*, p. 172).

had before signed, calling the community together, he angrily announced that he would return and bring them to reason. In truth, he cried, you are

"pures comme des anges, mais orgeuilleuses comme des démons." [1]

Meeting Madame de Guéméné as he stormed out of the court-yard, the heated Prelate repeated this remark, and mounting into his carriage almost shook his finger at the defiant convent.

About two weeks after this occurrence, a man hurriedly entering Madame de Longueville's drawing-room in the Carmélites was surprised to find there a large company of Jansenist friends and sympathizers assembled round the poet Molière, who was reading aloud his *Tartuffe*. At the moment (1664) Molière was at the height of his renown, and his newly written play *Tartuffe* the rage in Paris. The King believed it to be a satire on Port-Royal—indeed, one modern writer asserts that the poet wrote it on commission from Louis XIV to that effect. Many people pretended that Arnauld d'Andilly, the Duchesse de Longueville, and the Prince de Conti were all depicted in the various characters. No one knew, however, just what was meant, so the Jesuits laughed at it, believing it to be directed against the Jansenists; the Jansenists smiled quietly at each witticism it contained, thinking they recognized some particular trait of their enemies.

On this occasion, Molière's wit was suddenly interrupted, for the heated and excited messenger who had entered, going up to the hostess, said in a low tone:

"What, Madame, you are hearing a comedy on the day when the mystery of iniquity is being accomplished and they are taking away *nos mères*?"

Horrified, Madame de Longueville at once dismissed her guests, and herself hastened to consult with her friends as to what steps could be taken to help these poor sisters.

And indeed a terrible scene was just then taking place at Port-Royal de Paris. On hearing rumours of what was to happen, M. d'Andilly hurried to Port-Royal. M. de Péréfixe, after an unavoidable delay caused by his own illness, had finally kept his promise, and that day appeared at Port-Royal with the Lieutenant Civil, the Provost, and a guard of two

[1] As pure as angels, but proud as demons" (*Abrégé*, p. 172).

hundred archers, who invested the house and court. He also brought several carriages with the intention of taking away all those nuns who had refused to sign the Formulary. When M. de Péréfixe arrived at the gate of the monastery, the aged brother of Mère Angélique, throwing himself on his knees before him, begged mercy for the nuns. Very much moved, in spite of himself, M. de Péréfixe, raising M. d'Andilly to his feet, and saying a few kind words, passed on to execute the work he had planned.

Amid loud protestations—to which the irritated Archbishop rudely replied :

" Je m'en moque "—[1]

the twelve rebellious nuns were escorted to the outer door of the monastery, put into the carriages, and driven off, completely ignorant of the fate which awaited them. Faithful to the last, " Bonhomme d'Andilly " stood at the door as they came out. With firmness he conducted his sister Mère Agnès—now aged seventy-one, overwhelmed with infirmities, and having already had three strokes of apoplexy, hardly able to move—to the carriage, then his three daughters. Before bidding the latter good-bye, he took them into the church, and there at the altar again formally dedicated each to the Lord, whereupon, giving them his blessing, he allowed them to be driven away.[2]

It seemed a cruel turn of fate that in the crisis of their humiliation and persecution, the monastery called in to aid in the subjugation of Port-Royal should have been that of the Visitation, which Madame de Chantal, inspired by St. François de Sales, had founded in 1611, with the design of revealing a religion based on tenderness and love.[3] For Mère Angélique's friendship with Madame de Chantal was one of the greatest of her life, and, during the twenty years it lasted, the Head of the Visitation made no visit to Paris that she did not pass several days with Mère Angélique,

" pouring," says Racine, " her most secret thoughts into this friend's bosom, and desiring with ardour that the nuns of

[1] Fouillot, *Mémoires sur la Destruction de Port-Royal.* [2] *Ibid.*

[3] For reason for foundation of *Visitation*, see A. J. Hamon, *Vie de St. François de Sales*, ii. p. 2. Madame de Chantal afterward put herself under the direction of St. Cyran, whom she called " The Saint," and this fact retarded her canonization by fifty years (Gazier, in Racine's *Abrégé*).

the Visitation and those of Port-Royal should be always united by the same tie of friendship which had so closely bound their two mothers." [1]

And this was the end of such wishes. The door had scarcely closed upon Mère Agnès and the other courageous non-signers than it was opened to admit the gaolers of those who remained: Mère Eugénie de Fontaine, Abbess of the Visitation, and five of her nuns, commanded to appear there by the Archbishop. La Mère Eugénie, who had received Madame de Chantal's sanction and blessing before the latter's death, was a much-revered person, considered a second Madame de Chantal. But a convert from Calvinism, she had gone to an extreme in her devotion to Church authority. Similarly, although also pious and virtuous, the nuns of the Visitation were of essentially different stamp from those of Port-Royal, being Ultramontane, and so obedient to papal supremacy as to assert that even if the Pope had condemned their saint and model, St. François de Sales, they would condemn him also, and that

" one must believe of the Bible only what the Pope said." [2]

Thus, all the time that M. de Péréfixe was extolling her before her new charges at Port-Royal de Paris, the Abbess of the Visitation remained prostrate at his feet, her head against the earth, her nuns following the example of their leader. Such humility before man was not that of Port-Royal, and this beginning of the new rule shocked the disciples of St. Cyran immeasurably. With one voice they began to protest against being ruled over by Mère Eugénie, but to no avail.

A little later, Port-Royal was honoured by a visit from Anne of Austria. As her Majesty mounted her carriage at the Louvre, and said to her servants: " To Port-Royal ! " her Chevalier d'Honneur exclaimed:

" The Queen at Port-Royal ! Has she then become Jansenist ? "

Smiling, the Queen replied:

" It is not they whom I am going to see, but la Mère Eugénie."

As she was leaving, on the completion of her visit, one of the

[1] *Abrégé*, p. 8.
[2] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iv. p. 221.

old Port-Royal nuns threw herself at the Queen's feet, through her tears begging that the Sacraments of which they had been deprived should be restored to them.

Anne of Austria replied haughtily :

"Obey! What, nuns disobedient to their Archbishop! That is horrible. Obey, and you will always find me disposed to do you service. Yes, obey, and I will serve you—otherwise——"[1]

And, stopping abruptly, she went away.

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iv. p. 213.

CHAPTER XI

CAPTIVITY

"Ma mère," demanda avec grande anxieté une des religieuses à la Mère Agnès, "ma mère, lorsque les bourreaux viendront nous prendre, pour nous mener au martyre, ne faudra-t-il pas mettre nos grands voiles ?"

ON being sent away from Port-Royal, the twelve rebel nuns were distributed about in the various convents of Paris, where, under close supervision, some were treated well, others badly. Mère Agnès, attended by two of her nieces, Sisters Angélique de Sainte-Thérèse and Marie de Sainte-Claire, was taken to the Convent of the Visitation in the Rue St. Jacques. From the first, the idea of Mère Angélique's sister had been to sign the Formulary "en-tête"—that is, to append to the signature a statement that the submission was in the matter of faith alone, other points being reserved.[1]

In his introduction to a collection of the Letters of Mère Agnès, M. Faugère analyzed her as a person of great mind rather than of lofty character, and he defined her piety as "tender, affectionate, attractive, and of an extreme and many-hued delicacy." By these peculiarities, Mère Agnès showed herself true sister of Robert d'Andilly. Both were impassioned and quick; but while Robert was romantic, Agnès was mystical in the Spanish sense of the word. Mère Angélique and her youngest brother, the Great Arnauld, on the other hand, were calmer and better poised, turning more toward the Roman spirit of dignified intellectuality.[2] Those

[1] By his invention of the subtle distinction of fact and doctrine, which allowed the nuns to sign the Formulary, it was Nicole who really brought final ruin upon Port-Royal. The essence of his compromise was: "We condemn the Five Propositions said to be extracted from Jansenius, but we deny that they are there. Let them be shown us."

[2] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, i. p. 88.

who felt oppressed by the grandeur of Angélique had no fear of the softer spirit in Agnès.[1] The Marquise d'Aumont, who afterwards helped M. Le Maitre to collect documents on the life of Mère Angélique, said to the great Solitaire one day :

" I assure you, Monsieur, I get on better with Mère Agnès, *notre mère* is too severe for me." [2]

In response to a similar remark made by Madame de Saint-Ange, whom Mère Angélique had received very coldly on her first visit to Port-Royal, Madame d'Andilly replied :

" Mère Angélique resembles the good angels, who first affright, and afterward console."

And now throughout her captivity the demeanour of Mère Agnès was characterized by the individual sweetness peculiar to her. She suffered, prayed, and was desirous of anything that would lead to a reunion. She had no idea of signing herself, but she made no opposition to the action of others, leaving even her nieces free to do as they thought best. Afterward she blamed herself somewhat for this indifference, and expressed her repentance before the community.[3] Finally, influenced by the great Bossuet, the eldest niece, Angélique de Sainte-Thérèse, was induced to sign, and when a short time afterward Marie de Sainte-Claire Andilly also succumbed to the pressure brought to bear on the captive nuns, Port-Royal was agitated by a natural fear lest Mère Agnès herself be on the point of surrender :

" If these things happen to the green faith, what will become of the dry wood ? "

they said, forgetting for a moment that one who like Mère Agnès had been brought up under the shadow of the Great Angélique could not swerve from so plain an ideal. Christine Briquet, herself one of the steadfast sisters, had no such fear for Mère Agnès :

" I cannot easily believe that the stars have fallen from the sky," she said.[4]

[1] In the early days, Mère Angélique herself noticed this lenient quality in Agnès, and called it her " imperfection," recognizing it as the thing which impelled her to work with an ardour beyond her force, and to practise fasting, to be very regular at the offices (*Mémoires et Relations*, p. 29).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 229.

[3] Lettre du 24 Juin 1665.

[4] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iv. p. 277.

And it is on the whole a continuous history of courage and steadfastness that we read in the *Relations* written by the various nuns sent into captivity. Of all these marvellous tales, the best is that of M. d'Andilly's eldest daughter, Mère Angélique de St. Jean, whose experience of imprisonment in the Convent of the *Annonciades*, or *Filles Bleues*, was a most interesting and singular one. Her account, which is full of both real emotion and pathos, was not published until after its writer's death, in spite of the firm determination of Antoine Arnauld to make it public, for Angélique de St. Jean herself steadily refused to consent to such a thing.[1] From the age of six, the eldest daughter of M. d'Andilly had lived at Port-Royal, and as a child was considered almost too clever for her own good. Nevertheless a true Arnauld, in her the spirit of the Great Angélique seemed to have been re-incarnated. Through her uncle, Antoine Le Maitre, she was induced to collect material for a biography of Mère Angélique, and at the time of her imprisonment she had been engaged for twelve years in writing down the smallest details she could find of her aunt. Forty years of age at this period, her character had become so formed and rounded that the encomium passed upon her was that she had

" a soul very sad, tender, capable of all the beautiful agonies."

The Superior of the Convent of the *Filles Bleues*, in which Angélique de St. Jean was incarcerated, was the widow of the Maréchal Rantzau, a warrior so badly treated by the god of war as to have had finally nothing left whole " save his heart." Madame de Rantzau herself was a convert from Lutheranism, supposed to be very learned, and to have made many conversions among the Lutherans. In putting Angélique de St. Jean with this strong German, M. de Péréfixe said to the other sisters :

" Esprit avec esprit, science avec science ; celà s'accommodera bien."

Madame de Rantzau tried to convert her prisoner, and in the first long hours of her captivity Angélique de St. Jean, who was endowed with a quick imagination, went through every

[1] After her death, the work, in three volumes of Memoirs, was published at Utrecht.

stage of despair, being even assailed by the most terrible enemy of all — doubt. Her encounters with Madame de Rantzau furnish the sole comic side of the picture of this sad time, for, notwithstanding the "science" with which M. de Péréfixe credited the Superior of the *Filles Bleues*, Angélique was not long in discovering that her gaoler's knowledge was not profound, and wickedly delighted in putting the pompous lady in a corner, Madame de Rantzau's invariable assertion when thus lured into a theological trap being :

"I know all ecclesiastical history. I know everything, I will answer everything."

Turning her back, and going to the window to pray, Angélique would thereupon say humbly, but ironically :

"And I, Madame, I know nothing." [1]

Meanwhile, the nuns left behind at Port-Royal de Paris suffered in their own convent practically as great a confinement as their twelve exiled sisters. In the midst of these pure angels of Port-Royal, la Mère Eugénie was rather to be pitied. Hers was a difficult position. It was her duty to persuade the prisoners to sign the Formulary, but their repugnance to signing the declaration as to matters of which they were in reality absolutely ignorant, and their anguish at the quandary in which they were placed, was extreme. Through their simple religion, they had not only horror of a lie, but of any subterfuge whatever. They had never even read the *Augustinus*, so how could they swear that the abominable Five Propositions were contained therein?

In describing the captivity and persecution of the nuns of Port-Royal, Racine remarked :

"God sustained and conducted these admirable virgins."

Where, then, were the Solitaires who should have given

[1] *Relation de la Captivité de la Mère Angélique de St. Jean*, p. 38. During the latter part of her imprisonment, this talented daughter of Robert d'Andilly was induced to fashion a quantity of figures in wax for the sisters of the convent. Seeing the cleverness of her prisoner, Madame de Rantzau exclaimed : "Your mind is made like your fingers, and as you find all sorts of inventions for accomplishing the work you do, your mind furnishes you also with reasons for fortifying yourself in everything."

material aid to their spiritual sisters? Again it is Racine who answers:

"The great men who might have been able to enlighten and encourage them were themselves obliged to hide in order to avoid the violence which one wished to exercise against them." [1]

Lancelot attributes the firmness of the *religieuses* to a fear of wounding sincerity—they could not bear to think of an obscurity in signing. It was love of Truth which actuated and upheld them. For in both the trusting nuns and in his disciples, St. Cyran had implanted his own indomitable belief that "the least truth of Faith should be defended as with much fidelity as Jesus Christ." In her turn, Mère Angélique rallied her nuns on the fact that God judged them worthy to suffer for Truth and Justice!

All Paris finally became interested in the *signers* and *non-signers*, for treachery had crept in among the captives, both within and without, and at last about twelve sisters inside, and five among the exiles, gave up the struggle and signed away their faith. But in spite of these conquests, the supervision over both the nuns outside and in Port-Royal de Paris began to seem very purposeless and unsatisfactory, as well as expensive to the authorities.

In November of the same year in which he had visited Port-Royal de Paris, M. de Péréfixe made a similar visit to the Champs, and with a like result. Remaining two days, he left it too in anger, presenting the monastery with formal excommunication as a token. Twelve days afterward he sent an order to expel Confessors and Sacristan. M. Hamon, who was still on the premises, escaped arrest only by a clever retreat through the gardens. After much consultation, it was eventually decided to reunite the rebels at Port-Royal des Champs, there to keep all in regular guarded sequestration until they ceded to the Formulary.

The return of Mère Agnès and the twelve Paris rebel nuns was a great but mournful pleasure. Gathered up one by one from the various monasteries in which they had been kept the long ten months, they hardly dared express their joy at meeting, nor did the occupants of one carriage know definitely which of their companions were in the swiftly rolling vehicles

[1] *Abrégé*, p. 192.

following or preceding them. When they arrived at Port Royal des Champs, it seemed like a desolate and deserted place, and only two servants came out to the gates to bid them welcome or help them to alight. There was no ringing of bells, no bonfires of joy, no Solitaires drawn up in solemn array. What a contrast to the reception of Mère Angélique seventeen years before! But in a moment the church was filled with nuns, the service intoned, and afterward, going to the *Porte des Sacrements*, the Prioress, Madame du Fargis, calling all the community together, in the absence of the Abbess,[1] formally welcomed the new arrivals. Embracing their sisters in tenderness and gladness, the captives, a moment afterwards recollecting themselves, formally protested—as they considered their duty—to the Grand Vicar, who accompanied them, against the indignities they had received.

Thus, on the 2nd July 1665, Port-Royal des Champs again became revivified, filled with seventy-three nuns, not counting the working sisters. And now assembled in their old home, deprived of the Sacraments, they were treated like prisoners of war. Soldiers patrolled the place, and watched everything within the house itself. Only the working sisters were allowed to go to the Holy Eucharist, and it was rumoured that in order to approach the Holy Communion, Mère Agnès did not hesitate to disguise herself in the garb of a *converse*.

The consolation of the nuns at this time was, strangely enough, the eccentric doctor-Solitaire, Jean Hamon. After much solicitation, M. Hamon had been allowed by the authorities to return to the Champs on the condition that in his ministrations to the nuns he would always be accompanied by the warder. This was not the only indignity paid him: the soldiers at the walls scoffed at the shabby-looking man, who, winter and summer, appeared before them clothed in an old black cloak; and in derision, refusing to dignify him by the title of *Monsieur*, they addressed him as *Monseigneur*, *mon maitre*, or *mon ami*. At night, too, by order of the authorities, he was locked up in his room. Yet for the sake of his sisters in captivity, this great man endured cheerfully every hardship and slight, his reward being the knowledge that in these years of captivity he was their consolation and help, in every dark

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iv. p. 283.

hour which came to the nuns rendering them uninterruptedly the pious offices of priest, confessor, and doctor.

The romantic adventure during this period was accomplished by M. de Sainte-Marthe, who during the winter nights used often to leave Paris or Gif near by, and travel to Port-Royal des Champs, where, as agreed upon secretly with the nuns, he would at a specified place under the walls hold discourses to console and fortify the captives. Sometimes he would bring the last Sacrament to a dying person, Racine testifying that by his efforts not one person died without the last unction.[1]

For nearly four years this captivity continued, but finally the bravery of the outside Jansenist world accomplished the result for which they had so long been working, and, chiefly through the exertions and influence of the Duchesse de Longueville, the Peace of the Church was at last realized.

[1] According to Nicole, M. de Sainte-Marthe was the saintliest man whom he had seen at Port-Royal (Racine, *Abrégé*, p. 203). Mère Angélique, on the contrary, never admired him. His greatest eulogy is the unspoken testimony given by Pascal, who selected him from among all the Confessors at Port-Royal, and, sending for him in his last hours, confided to him the most secret thoughts of his soul. The *Nécrologe* speaks of his impatience of anything false, his love of the truth, his laments, his silence, his withdrawal into obscurity, and there his gradual wasting away.

PART IV

PORT-ROYAL DECADENT

1669–1712

CHAPTER I

THE PEACE OF THE CHURCH—DEATH OF MADAME DE LONGUEVILLE

" Merveilleuse beauté, race de tant de rois, Princesse, dont l'elat fait honte aux immortelles." DESMARETS

FOR five long years [1] (1664 to 1669) Antoine Arnauld and Nicole had lived hidden in the Hôtel de Longueville. Accustomed to the fine gallants of the Hôtel Rambouillet, the five or six hours a day Madame de Longueville spent in the company of these gentlemen, who for all their saintliness were not quite delicate in their manners, was often less a pleasure than a trial of her piety—especially when Doctor Arnauld so far forgot the usages of good society as to take off his braces in her drawing-room, or when the absent-minded scholar Nicole quietly deposited his hat, gloves, cane, and muff on her bed. Sincere indeed was the humility which silently endured such tests.

Being the most polished of the two, Nicole was Madame de Longueville's favourite, and in disputes she usually sided with him, addressing him in her turn with old-fashioned courtesy as " M. l'Abbe." [2]

During this season of enforced retreat and solitude, the *Messieurs* were also busy with literary work. Thinking that the publication of the result of one of their labours, the " New Testament of Mons," as it was called,[3] might aid their cause,

[1] Racine, *Abrégé*, p. 201.

[2] When she died, therefore, Nicole lamented that with her he was deprived of much consideration : " I have even lost my abbey," he said, " for now no one calls me M. l'Abbé Nicole, but just plain Nicole " (*ibid.*).

[3] This translation of the New Testament was made, according to Mère Angélique de St. Jean, by Le Maitre, who had " dug the foundations " ; De Saci, who had " elevated the whole edifice " ; and by Arnauld, who had

conferences were held on the subject at the Hôtel de Longueville. It was on coming away from one of these, 12th May 1666, with the preface of the new work under his arm, that M. de Saci, with his friend and secretary Nicolas Fontaine, was seized and thrust into the Bastille, there to remain for over three years. Always in anticipation of arrest, M. de Saci's greatest regret on this occasion seems to have been that for the first time in two years he had not in his pocket a little volume of St. Paul, which in provision for just such an accident he had had bound specially.

The greatest obstacle to any conciliation of factions inside the Church was the saintly M. Pavillon, Bishop of Aleth, who had converted the Prince de Conti—a priest of such renown that even in his lifetime pilgrimages were undertaken to Aleth solely to see him and hear his words. This great reformer of a very degenerate diocese at the foot of the Pyrenees had not come into the fold of Port-Royal until the beginning of persecution, when after a long study he declared that his conscience would not allow him to sign the Formulary condemning the Five Propositions.[1] From this time, a correspondence had begun between Pavillon and Arnauld, he in company with three other bishops—those of Angers, Beauvais, and Pamiers—sustained the cause of Port-Royal, refusing to sign the Formulary. Finally, after many negotiations, M. Pavillon, the most obstinate of the four, was won over to subscription of the Formulary with a "but" attached to it, and once his consent was gained, the other three Bishops were easily induced to follow his example on the same grounds: *i.e.* with a declaration to the effect that they did not comprehend the Five Propositions in the sense in which they were condemned.

This submission sealed the so-called "Peace of the Church." Even Père Annat had to succumb, allowing himself only a

"put on the finishing touch" (Lettre à Arnauld, 1668). Appearing in 1667, it is said to have materially contributed to the Peace of the Church.

[1] In gratitude for his loyalty to them, in 1666 the nuns of Port-Royal sent the Bishop of Aleth an embroidered girdle on which all the community, even Mère Agnès, had worked. On his part, M. Pavillon greatly admired the courageous nuns, and of the *Messieurs* he said: "We knew nothing before we knew the *Messieurs* of Port-Royal: and we cannot praise God enough for having allowed us to know them" (Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iv. p. 44).

last criticism of the Papal Nuncio who had aided greatly in the conclusion of the affair :

" You have ruined by the weakness of a quarter of an hour the work of twenty years," he said.[1]

Receiving Antoine Arnauld in audience, the King remarked that he was glad to see a man of his merit, and that he hoped the learned Doctor would henceforth employ his talents in the defence of the true religion.[2] On the same day the Champion of Jansenism went to St. Jacques du Haut Pas to hear Mass. Here he found the bells ringing, the candles illuminated on the altar, and the Curé of the church waiting to receive him quite as if he were an archbishop. De Saci, too, released from the Bastille, after his imprisonment of over two years, was presented in due course to his Sovereign. On seeing the priest of whom he had heard so much, Louis XIV, turning to M. de Pomponne, said :

" Well, now you are satisfied ! " [3]

In the midst of these honours, the emancipated Jansenists did not forget to place the credit where it was due. To Madame de Longueville belonged the true glory ; it was she who was the leading spirit in the arrangement which led to another and most important respite in the persecution of Port-Royal. To Clement IX she cleverly represented the Jansenists to be :

" Le plus grand et le plus petit parti du monde, le plus fort et le plus faible," [4]

demonstrating that through their humility they were at once great and small, strong and weak, but at the same time reminding him that to the faith of the persecuted belonged some of the most influential people in the land. Thus, as Sainte-Beuve says:

" She contributed as much as any prelate to the Peace of the Church," [5]

a truce which not only brought quiet to the persecuted Jansenists, but secured tranquillity to them throughout the ten years which preceded the death of their benefactress.

[1] Gerberon, *Histoire du Jansénisme*, vol. iii. p. 259.
[2] *Ibid*, vol. i. p. 363.
[3] Fuzet, *Les Jansénistes du XVII Siècle*, p. 398.
[4] Lettre du 25 Juillet 1667.
[5] *Port-Royal*, iv. p. 366.

And, after every event which concerned them in their new prosperity, it was to the Hôtel de Longueville that the rejoicing circle repaired to talk over their good fortune and to thank her who had occasioned it all.[1] So happy were they over this great event that they wished to consecrate the date by a monument of some kind. They therefore had a large medal struck off at the Mint. On one side was the face and name of the King ; on the other, an altar on which lay an open book ; on the book the keys of St. Peter, the royal sceptre and Hand of Justice, above which was represented the radiant image of the Holy Spirit, with these words :

" Gratia et Pax a Deo."

The whole was interpreted as follows : The book lying on the altar was the *Augustinus* of Jansenius closed by Alexander VII and opened by Clement IX. The keys of St. Peter lying with the royal insignia, meant the equality of the royal and papal powers. The word " Gratia " recalled the doctrine of Grace, and " Pax " signified that reconciliation was the price of victory, not of obedience and submission.

Although Louis XIV looked askance at the medal, it remained. As, however, he sent word to Madame de Longueville that it displeased him to have her entertain the Jansenists in her house, she went to St. Germain and asked if she might not be allowed to hold assemblies of *gens de bien* like Bossuet and Madame de Miramion. The King replied :

" No assemblies, Madame, if you please, I beg of you."

Notwithstanding this interdiction, the cousin of the King courageously continued to lodge the Port-Royalists in her house, making no concession but that of greater discretion.[2]

Three years after the Peace of the Church, Madame de

[1] Fontaine paid the following tribute to Madame de Longueville, after the Peace of the Church was consummated, in the form of a prayer to God : " Reward, Oh God, Thy servant a hundredfold for what she has done for Thy glory, for the interest of Thy church, and for Thy very humble servitors. . . . Thou hast doubtless written the reward of this princess in heaven. . . . She suffered peaceably the opprobrium of the proud : she knew what was said of her in contempt, and that they did not blush to call her the shame and ignominy of the royal family. Thou shalt make it to be seen, Lord, that she was its ornament, and St. Louis has surely not blushed for her in the Heavens " (*Mémoires*).

[2] Fuzet, *Les Jansénistes du XVII Siècle*, p. 398.

Longueville adding a corps of buildings to the Abbey of Port-Royal des Champs, from which a covered gallery led to a tribune in the church, divided her time between Port-Royal des Champs and the Carmélites. At Port-Royal she redoubled her austerities, and it became her custom to isolate herself for weeks at a time in the damp and desolate "desert." Thus it was at Port-Royal that the greatest sorrow of her life came to her, for she was there when news of the death of her youngest son, the Comte de Saint-Paul, reached her. She had but two boys, and of these the eldest, the Comte de Dunois, had from his birth been a continual trial and tribulation. The details of his career are not known precisely, but history relates that one day, leaving his titles and rights to his younger brother, he fled from his mother's house to go to Rome, there to take Holy Orders.[1]

The second son, born at the Hôtel de Ville, and called Charles de Paris by the Aldermen of the City, who stood sponsors at his baptism, on the contrary, was the pride of his mother's heart, the joy of her life, very fruit of the Fronde. He, on his part, was not a particularly dutiful or thoughtful son, though eulogized by Madame de Sévigné as lacking only

"a little pride, vanity, and haughtiness." [2]

When in 1672, owing to the wrong understanding of an order given by his uncle and chief, the Grand Condé, the Comte de Paris (then Duc de Longueville) was killed during the famous Passage of the Rhine,[3] Madame de Longueville's unique consolation must have been that, only a short time before leaving for the army, he had become converted by *Ces*

[1] The Duc de Longueville had interested himself particularly in the education of his eldest son, who was almost an idiot, and given him a Jesuit tutor. After his father's death, at the age of seventeen (his brother was three years younger) he came to live with his mother in Paris. He was nineteen when he fled to Rome. There he took the name of the Abbé d'Orléans, and in 1669 was ordained priest.

[2] Letter of the 3rd July 1672.

[3] Madame de Sévigné had most touchingly described Madame de Longueville's reception of the news of her son's death brought her by Mlle. de Vertus: "Ah! mon cher fils! Est-il mort sur le champ? N'a-t-il pas eu un seul moment? Ah! mon Dieu, quel sacrifice! Et la-dessys elle tombe sur son lit, et tout ce que la plus vive douleur put faire, et par des convulsions, et par des évanouissements, et par un silence mortel, et par des cris étouffés, et par des larmes amères, et par des élans vers le ciel, et par des plaintes tendres et pitoyables, elle a tout éprouvé" (20th June 1672).

Messieurs, and had begun a spiritual life, the Port-Royalists thereafter considering him a saint.

The son's death sounded in reality his mother's death-knell, but for seven weary years existence dragged on for her, and was made endurable by good works and pious exercises, the interest of seeing a crowd of penitents—among whom was Louise de la Vallière—pass through these her two religious retreats. At last,[1] the end came, at the Carmélites, on the 15th April 1679. The funeral eulogy was not delivered until a year afterwards, then, strangely enough, only a few days after the death of M. de la Rochefoucauld. Instead of the great Bossuet, it was preached by the Abbé de la Roquette, formerly in the Condé household, and become Bishop of Autun, an ecclesiastic supposed to have been the original of Molière's *Tartuffe*. This sermon was not allowed to be printed, so we learn its epitome again through Madame de Sévigné, who comments thus on the Bishop of Autun and his task:

"He was a prelate of consequence," she wrote, "preaching with dignity, and going through the Princess's life with incredible address, passing the delicate points, saying or not saying what should be said or not said." [2]

Mourning Madame de Longueville, the Queen of *Dévotes*, and a benefactor who had secured them the boon of peace, Port-Royal at least forgot the mistakes of Madame de Longueville's youth. And if their benedictions, and those of the multitude to whom she made restitution for the misery she had caused during the Fronde, could have wiped out her sins, she must now certainly occupy a high place in that heaven of which Jansenius and St. Cyran dreamed, and in which they awaited souls over whom they had watched in their earthly days.

And though Madame de Longueville is remembered in French history chiefly for that unsurpassable beauty and charm which attracted to her such men as the Great Condé, La Rochefoucauld, and the serious scholars of Port-Royal, her value from an ethical and social point of view has been most aptly summed up as the crown of humility.[3] An unknown

[1] Her age was fifty-nine years and seven months.
[2] Lettre du 12 Avril 1680.
[3] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, v. p. 133.

LA DUCHESSE DE LONGUEVILLE

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY WALTENER

Jansenist author—suspected to be Nicole—in a MS. discovered by Sainte-Beuve at the Bibliothèque Nationale, giving a summary of her character, attributed to her qualities equally to be esteemed from a religious or from a worldly standpoint. He dwells upon the fact that she herself never said ill of a person, and that to hear evil spoken gave her pain. Observing her humility, her lack of affectation, her power of listening attentively, he concluded his eulogy by the statement that everything about her—voice, face, gestures—made a perfect music, while both her physical being and her mind served so well in the expression of what she desired to say, that she was

"the most finished actress in the world." [1]

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, v. p. 135. To his sister, the Duchesse d'Epernon M. de Pontchâteau wrote apropos of Madame de Longueville: "Il y avait des faiblesses: qui n'en a point? Elle les voyoit et en gémissoit; c'est presque tout ce que Dieu demande de nous" (Lettre du 22 Avril 1679).

CHAPTER II

RACINE'S QUARREL AND RECONCILIATION WITH PORT-ROYAL

"O repos! O tranquillité!
O d'un parfait bonheur assurance éternelle,
Quand la suprême autorité
Dans ses conseils a toujours auprès d'elle
La justice et la verité."

Athalie

THE newest and most sensational work on Racine, written by his great-great-nephew, M. Masson Forestier,[1] endeavours to prove that the foremost French tragic poet never belonged to Port-Royal at all. Having carefully perused M. Masson Forestier's long pages, however, it is difficult to find any convincing proof of what the author has so minutely tried to demonstrate, and in re-telling the simple facts of his history we gladly leave it to our readers to estimate for themselves the effect of Port-Royal on the poet, as well as Racine's own sincerity in his conversion and subsequent life.

In the pages of one of the *Nécrologes* of Port-Royal he is classified:

"M. Racine, poète, Solitaire of Port-Royal, author of *Esther*, *Athalie*, of the *Cantiques Spirituels*, and of the *Abrégé de l'Histoire de Port-Royal*." [2]

That they ignored his profane plays, and a certain period of his life, does not make him any less one of their number.

[1] *Autour d'un Racine ignoré*, Paris, Mercure de France, 1910.

[2] L. Brédif, *Racine et Port-Royal* (Mélanges). The *Nécrologe* and *Supplément* each give Racine a notice, each speak of his profane dramatic works, and also of his period of worldly dissipation. The above-quoted comes from another Nécrologe of the *Friends* of Port-Royal.

Forced to leave Port-Royal des Champs on the final destruction of the Petites Écoles, Racine had apparently quickly lost its influence. We are told that at the Collège de Harcourt, where he was sent to study philosophy, he soon fell into irreligious ways. Hearing of this, his solicitous and pious family conceived the plan of putting him with his uncle Sconin, a Canon at Usèz, who, possessor of many fat benefices, had promised to endow his nephew with them. On his arrival at Usèz, his uncle accordingly at once dressed the nineteen-year-old Racine in a complete suit of black, and was about to have him tonsured, when the young aspirant himself, already weary of the forced hypocrisy and sycophancy he met with in the provinces, renounced the religious life, together with his uncle's proposed ecclesiastical honours, and returned to Paris, carrying with him the beginning of his first tragedy, *The Thébaïde, ou les Frères ennemis.*

When he returned, his grandmother, Marie des Moulins, having died at Port-Royal, leaving as only remaining relative in authority, his aunt Agnès de St. Thècle Racine, a nun at Port-Royal, Racine found himself comparatively free and master of his own destiny. He at once began his career by a trial of the poetic gift, the possession of which had been denied him by both Le Maitre and De Saci.[1]

His cousin Vitart took his first effort, an ode to Louis XIV on his marriage, called " La Nymphe de la Seine," to Chapelain, who found it very fine and very poetic, in spite of the detail of the Seine being peopled with Tritons instead of nymphs—a grave mistake in the eyes of the conservative old poet. Perrault confirmed Chapelain's dictum, and soon Colbert, Intendant of Finance, presented the author with a purse of one hundred louis. According to pious ideas, this success was Racine's ruin, for it settled his taste in literature, and caused him to give rein to his ruling passion—that of writing for the stage.

Among his first friends at this period were Molière and La Fontaine. A second ode, called " La Rénommée aux

[1] M. de Saci, it would seem, was rather jealous of Racine, and finding his verses unlike his own, represented to the young poet that poetry was not his talent. M. Le Maitre, on his part, wishing to make an advocate of his clever pupil, also discouraged the writing of verse (Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, vi. p. 93).

Muses," written soon after "La Nymphe de la Seine," brought him not only the protection of the Comte de St. Agnan and entrance to the Court, but—more valuable still—a third friendship, that of Nicolas Boileau, called Despréaux, considered by some of the most eminent critics to have written the finest verses in the French language.[1] At first the four led a frivolous existence. With four or five other associates of more notoriety for their adherence to Bacchus than literary reputation, they used to foregather either at one of the three celebrated inns of the day, "Le Mouton Blanc," "Pomme de Pin," and "Croix de Lorraine," or at Boileau's lodgings at Auteuil. On these occasions, it was Boileau's influence alone which kept Racine from giving himself up entirely to the wildest dissipation. Indeed, Boileau was destined to have a tremendous and most salubrious effect on Racine's history. Only three years older than his new friend, Boileau was also of a satiric, light-hearted vein, and indissolubly linked with both Molière and La Fontaine, especially the former, whom he particularly admired.[2]

Molière was by this time well settled in his career, a man of forty, and eighteen years older than Racine. His influence had the effect, says M. Jules Lemaitre in his *Jean Racine*,[3] of dissipating any disposition the young Hellenist may have had toward the *précieux* or sentimental side of literature. The brusque realism of Molière took him away from the flowers, the dew, the shadows, and the fountains, and inspired in him nothing less than a love of the true and the natural. From Molière, too, he gained an idea of the tragedy of life, for, though an inimitable companion at times, the great actor-manager, always unhappy and unfortunate in his domestic surroundings, was more often than not melancholy rather than gay.

La Fontaine's personality, on the other hand, was not

[1] "It was a tender, grave, and earnest friendship" (Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, vi. p. 105), and that Racine appreciated it is proved by the fact that when he was dying, embracing Boileau, he said: "I look upon it as good fortune for me to die before you" (*ibid.*). (They met in 1664.)

[2] "Asked in his old age whom he considered the geniuses of his century, Boileau replied: 'I know only three—Corneille, Molière, . . . and myself.' 'And Racine?' demanded his astonished questioner. 'Racine,' replied Boileau, 'was only a *bel esprit* whom I with difficulty taught to make easy verses'" (Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, vi. note, p. 122).

[3] P. 9.

calculated to instil into the younger poet any force or stability of character. Ever irresponsible and irregular, although also older than Racine by nineteen years, the paganism of the author of the *Fables*, says M. Lemaitre,

"acted like a dissolvant of Racine's religious education."[1]

In fact, by nature La Fontaine was the last man in the world to appreciate Port-Royal and its grandeur. He had mocked at Escobar; called Jansenius "the author of vain debates," his followers, "authors full of mind and good disputes"—but, and here is the crux of the whole matter, he had also vowed that the lessons of his Port-Royal friends seemed to him a little sad. Nevertheless, to compliment these friends, he wrote a poem called "La Captivité de Saint-Malc," on a subject taken from M. d'Andilly's "Pères des Déserts"; and in return for Arnauld's admiration of his *Fables*, determined to dedicate to the grave doctor one of his very *risqué Contes*, as well as to eulogize him in the Preface. It was with the greatest difficulty that Racine and Boileau dissuaded the careless poet from this design. Arnauld never knew the honour which had threatened him—one which would have shocked his pious taste.

In the early years of their friendship, Racine took his *Thébaïde* to Molière, now established as the head of the Theatre of the Palais Royal,[2] and busy producing his own and other plays. Paying him a sum in advance, the famous actor-manager at once accepted Racine's play, afterwards revising the work to suit the requirements of the stage. As a requital of this kindness, the poet, who owed it to Molière[3] to first submit to him any subsequent work, is credited with having committed the dastardly action of taking his *Alexandre* to the Hôtel de Bourgogne, and placing it secretly in rehearsal, Molière knowing nothing of the matter until the production of the play at the rival theatre.[4] This and other breaches

[1] *Jean Racine*, p. 9.

[2] At this epoch Paris possessed three theatres, the Palais Royal, the Marais, and the Hôtel de Bourgogne, where during seven months of the year performances were given on three days of the week.

[3] The *Thébaïde* was not very popular and only given a few times, whereas *Alexandre* was a great success.

[4] Dec. 4, 1665.

of friendship [1] caused Molière from that time forward to sever all connection with his former associate.

At Port-Royal, meantime, Racine's saintly aunt, Agnès de Saint-Thècle, had been noting her nephew's career, and continually pleading with him to give up his mode of life which "dishonoured him before God and man." [2] Racine, however, only grew angry, and exclaimed that he knew how to take care of himself. It was in this state of mind he was drawn into what he afterwards considered the greatest folly of his life. It seems that in Paris at this time a playwright called Desmaretz de Saint-Sorlin, particularly heated against what he called "la fausse Église des Jansénistes," had actually proposed to the King to raise an army of 144,000 men, and, putting himself at the head of it, to stamp out the heresy by blood. This idea being expressed in a satirical comedy entitled *Les Visionnaires*, Nicole took upon himself to reply by ten letters, called:

"Lettres sur l'Hérésie Imaginaire,"

following these the next year by eight other letters, styled "Les Visionnaires." Not content with ridiculing Desmaretz, Nicole enveloped in his anathema all writers of novels and theatrical pieces, stating that

"a maker of novels and a poet of the theatre is a *public poisoner*, not of bodies, but of souls of the faithful who may consider themselves guilty of an infinity of spiritual homicides."

Stupidly imagining Nicole to have had the intention of humiliating him in his character of poet, Racine indignantly retaliated by a piquant letter [3] containing unkind remarks against his old friends, insulting especially the two saints of

[1] One of which was making love to the actress Du Parc of Molière's company, and inducing her to leave the staff of the Palais Royal (1667). A year later Molière satirized Racine at his theatre in a play called *La folle Querelle ou la Critique d'Andromache.*

[2] "I conjure you, therefore, my dear nephew," she wrote, "to have pity on your soul, and to return into your heart there to consider seriously into what an abyss you have thrown yourself."

[3] "And what can novels and comedies have in common with Jansenism?" he exclaimed (letter addressed to "L'Auteur des Hérésies imaginaires" (Nicole), January 1666).

Port-Royal, Le Maitre and Mère Angélique. Of the former he said :

" You reproach M. Desmaretz with his boldness, after an intemperate life, in writing on the subject of religion. But tell me, Monsieur, what did M. le Maitre do in the world ? He pleaded, he made verses ; all that is equally profane, according to your maxims. He also avowed in a letter that he had led a disorderly life, and that he had retired among you to weep his crimes. How, then, did you suffer that he should make so many translations, so many books on the subject of Grace ? "

The satire on Mère Angélique was a story of two Capuchin monks, who came to Port-Royal des Champs, and begged the usual hospitality. According to custom, they were received courteously but coldly. After they were seated at table, and had partaken of wine and white bread, however, somebody suggested to Mère Angélique that one of these priests was a certain Père Maillard, who had solicited at Rome the *Bulle* against Jansenius. Outraged, Mère Angélique at once ordered that the white bread and wine be removed, and replaced by black bread and common cider. Although surprised at the change, the priests said nothing, and went to bed.

The next morning, as they were saying Mass, M. de Bagnols came in, and in one of the suspected priests recognized a relative of his own. Mère Angélique being told of this, the Capuchins were conducted from the church to the refectory, and there regaled with the choicest viands the house afforded. Racine advised the *Messieurs* of Port-Royal to make a special chapter of this incident, entitled :

" On the spirit of discernment which God had given the holy Mère Angélique."

No reply was made at first to this attack. But, in a reprint made the next year of the *Imaginaires*, Nicole put in the Preface a statement that everything that Racine had said was foreign to common sense, and false from beginning to end. Racine thereupon wrote another letter, more bitter and sarcastic than the first, but, reading it to Boileau, the latter prevented its publication.

In the thirteen years which intervened between Racine's rupture and reconciliation with Port-Royal (1664–77), " the

most perfect of French poets" [1] produced his greatest profane plays. It was through his tragedy of *Phèdre* that he received the first blow of malignant fortune.

A poet named Pradon had written a play on the same subject, treated very differently. It was arranged that both works should be given simultaneously, but when the night came, owing to a plot of the Duc de Nevers and the Duchesse de Bouillon, the boxes at Racine's performance were empty, those of Pradon full. Moreover, thanks to 15,000 livres donated by the Duchess, Pradon's miserable *Phèdre* was played sixteen times, while Racine's was at the moment a failure. Yet, if we may believe eminent critics, Racine's tragedy was a greater success than any one knew. Ever since writing *Iphigénie,* three years before, the souvenir of Port-Royal had been present with the poet.[2] In *Phèdre* he had endeavoured to reconcile paganism and Christianity, and had almost succeeded:

"The expression of antique fatalism in this piece approaches, in short, very sensibly that which a vigorous Christianity involves."

And, says his biographer:

"The inquietude which his first Christian tragedy inspired in him, succeeded in making him a Christian." [3]

The disappointment at the failure of *Phèdre* completed his disillusion with regard to the glories of the world, and suddenly, at thirty-seven years of age, at the acme of his genius, in the height of his fame, he was seized with the desire to give up everything and to devote himself to the life of the spirit. Once becoming possessed with this idea, the ever-present remembrance of Port-Royal and his early life in the Desert weighed more and more heavily upon him, until he was filled with the thought of becoming reconciled to his former masters.

To obtain the forgiveness of Nicole was comparatively

[1] "If," said Retz, "Turenne is the most perfect of French heroes, Racine is the most perfect of French poets." Valincour, one of Racine's best friends, and his successor at the Academy, thus described him: "Of a medium height, agreeable physiognomy, frank face, pointed nose, the mark of a mind inclined to raillery. . . . At the end of his life, piety moderated this trait. He was pitiless against deeds, pitiful toward sufferers" (*Gaulois,* 10 Avril 1899).

[2] Jules Lemaitre, *Jean Racine,* p. 268.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 317.

easy. When a relative led the repentant poet to his lodgings, this old master received his former pupil with open arms. But, with Arnauld, it was more difficult. The brother of Mère Angélique could not forget Racine's pleasantries with regard to the two Capuchin monks. Several times Boileau tried to effect a reconciliation, and failed. Finally, this zealous friend took Arnauld a copy of *Phèdre* with the author's compliments. Arnauld read the masterpiece, was mollified, and when, brought by Boileau the poet came and in the presence of a large company fell on his knees before Arnauld, the latter also dropped down beside the penitent, both embracing in this posture.[1]

Fortunately, Racine's wise confessor induced him to renounce the project he had made in the first enthusiasm of his repentance, of becoming a monk of Chartreux, and advised him to lead the saner life for one of his disposition by settling down into family relations. He married, therefore, and, living henceforth "like a good bourgeois," had five children whom he raised in a Christian manner.

The very year of his reconciliation with Port-Royal (1677), Racine and Boileau were appointed Royal Historians. Following Louis XIV in all his campaigns, it was their duty to report the exploits of the *Grand Monarque*.[2] Always devoted to Louis XIV, from this time on, Racine was possessed by but two passions: his religion and his King.

In his official capacity he revelled in flowery language and extravagant compliments. Louis XIV himself, albeit fond of flattery, felt this over-praise of Racine, for he remarked with regard to one of his eulogies:

"I am very satisfied; I would praise you more, if you had praised me less."[3]

But Racine's love for his Sovereign did not lead him to dis-

[1] Gustave Larroumet, *Racine*, p. 30.

[2] November 3, 1677, Madame de Sévigné wrote of Racine and Despréaux as follows: "The King said to them four days ago: 'I am sorry you did not come on this last campaign; you would have seen the war, and your journey would not have been long.' Racine replied: 'Sire, we are two *bourgeois* who have only city clothes; we ordered some for the campaign; but the places which you attacked were taken sooner than our clothes were finished.' This was agreeably received."

[3] *Vie de Messire Antoine Arnauld*, 1781, vol. ii. p. 413.

guise his connection with the sect so hated by Louis XIV. He adored the latter, but in the midst of his most pressing duties at Versailles, where he was occupied chiefly in celebrating the great deeds of his royal master, he never forgot his friends at Port-Royal.[1] Indeed, it was in order to make the Cardinal de Noailles favourable to the Port-Royalists that he wrote the *Abrégé de l'Histoire de Port-Royal*, a work considered by the critics as a marvel of clear statement of events as well as concise and elegant writing. Still, he remained in such favour, that when, during an illness of the monarch, the poet sent to Versailles four *Cantiques Spirituelles* written at the King's request for St. Cyr, and set to music by Moreau, ill as he was, Louis XIV had them at once sung to him. He was also in the habit of keeping Racine near him, and on one occasion even desired him to sleep in his room.

After the representation of Racine's *Andromache* at St. Cyr, Madame de Maintenon wrote to the poet and begged him to compose for her in his moments of leisure

"A kind of poem, moral or historical, from which love should be entirely banished, which the young ladies of St. Cyr could act." [2]

This request embarrassed Racine, who had renounced play writing fully six years before, yet he was enough of a courtier still to know that he must accede to any request of this powerful lady. Therefore, after some deliberation and advice from Boileau, he compounded with his conscience by choosing the subject of *Esther*, which seemed to solve the difficulty. On proposing it to the authorities of St. Cyr, they conceded the story to be full of

"great lessons of the love of God and detachment from the world in the midst of the world itself." [3]

[1] When on April 25, 1899, the two hundredth anniversary of Racine's death was celebrated at La Ferté Milon and by a pilgrimage to Port-Royal des Champs, articles appeared in the *Gaulois*, *Temps*, and *Figaro*, written by some of the greatest *littérateurs* of France, in the first-named, M. Léon Séché said: "From the time of his conversion, the Abbey had no protector more vigilant than Racine—one might say that he covered it with his body . . . for the Court and the Archbishopric found him before them each time they wished to take rigorous measures with regard to the nuns. He thought and lived but for Port-Royal, and if he continued to go to Versailles, it was less to pay his court to the King than with the design of humanizing him."

[2] De Lescure, *Souvenirs de la Marquise de Caylus*, p. 164.

[3] Théophile Lavallée, *L'Histoire de la Maison de St. Cyr*, p. 77.

In 1689, six performances of the new play were given at St. Cyr. Here, in the great vestibule adjoining the dormitories, two vast amphitheatres were arranged against the walls, the largest for the pupils, dressed in different colours according to their ages: pupils up to eleven years being in red; those less than fourteen, in green; less than seventeen, in yellow; and lower down, the eldest, in blue. Between the two amphitheatres were seated the spectators from the outside. The room was magnificently lighted, the scenes painted by Born, the Court decorator, the choruses accompanied by the musicians of the King. The Persian costumes of the actresses had cost more than forty thousand livres, and the precious stones which ornamented them those formerly used by the King in his ballets.

All the grandees of the Court craved invitations to these performances, not only out of curiosity, but in order to pay court to the King and Madame de Maintenon. Bossuet was at the *première,* when the King, stationing himself at the door, remained there, holding his cane erect to serve as a barrier, until the guests had entered, when he gave the signal to begin.

The success of *Esther* was tremendous. Everybody tried to fit the great personages to the different characters, seeing in Vashti, Madame de Montespan, the replaced favourite; in Madame de Maintenon, Esther herself; in Mardochée, perhaps the Grand Arnauld; in Aman, Louvois; while who could the race so hated by Aman be but the Jansenists? And surely

" ce lieu par la Grace habité "

could only be the monastery in the Desert?

All Port-Royal was enthusiastic over this play. Quesnel in a letter to Père Du Breuil said:

" I have read it with much pleasure. The sentiments of Christian piety and the maxims of a heart truly royal are expressed therein so happily that one cannot help being touched."

But, added the true Jansenist, who did not approve of the theatre,

" If one had been satisfied to put it on paper, I should have been still more content."

It is said that *Esther*, more than any other of Racine's plays, was the reflection of his childhood's days in the woods and plains of the Valley Yvette.

The cause of the poet's disgrace was a memoir on the misery of the people, which he had drawn up at the request of Madame de Maintenon, and which she promised to keep secret from the King. In this writing, he rather criticized the royal policy. Unfortunately, the pamphlet fell into the King's hands, and Madame de Maintenon was obliged to divulge the name of its author. From that day, by the change in the King's manner, Racine felt that he was no longer in favour. At last Madame de Maintenon, meeting the poet one day in the Gardens of Versailles, tried to console him by saying that she would bring him back good weather again, if only he would let this cloud pass.

"No, no, Madame, you will never bring it back to me."

"What!" exclaimed the favourite, "do you doubt my heart or my credit?"

"I know, Madame," said the former favourite, "both your credit and the goodness you have for me, but I have an aunt who loves me in a very different fashion: this holy maid asks God every day for new disgrace, new humiliation, new subject of penitence, and she will have more credit than you."

At that moment a carriage was heard approaching.

"Fly!" cried Madame de Maintenon. "It is the King!" [1]

This was the last blow at Racine's love for his Sovereign. On the 21st April 1699, the disgraced courtier and inspired poet died, aged only fifty-nine, leaving, as last earthly wish, the request that he be interred at Port-Royal des Champs.

"I desire," he wrote, "that after my death my body be carried to Port-Royal des Champs, and inhumed in the cemetery at the foot of the grave of M. Hamon. I supplicate very humbly the Mother Abbess and the nuns to be good enough to accord me this honour, although I recognize that I am unworthy of it.

Boileau is one authority for the belief that Racine had come to virtue through Religion, his temperament inclining him to be satirical, restless, jealous, and voluptuous.[2] Sainte-

[1] Louis Racine, *Mémoires*. [2] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, vi. p. 106.

Beuve says he was born "docile,"[1] but all biographers agree in pronouncing him "difficult" at least. But whatever his character, his will testifies that Port-Royal had finally become to him, after all, the reality of his life, and this in defiance of the malicious epigram which, apropos of his desire to find an eternal home at Port-Royal in the "Solitude," went the rounds of Paris:

"Il n'aurait jamais fait celà de son vivant."[2]

[1] *Port-Royal*, vi. p. 121.

[2] "Never would he have done such a thing in his lifetime."

CHAPTER III

PERSECUTION RESUMED

" Ne vaut-il pas mieux endurer une fois la mort que l'appréhender à tous moments ? "

DURING the ten years which followed the Peace of the Church, Port-Royal proper sustained the loss of many of its courageous spirits, prominently that of Mère Agnès de Saint-Paul, the 19th February 1671. Her funeral was the occasion of pathetic incidents. Antoine Arnauld officiated, and no less than thirteen ecclesiastics took part in her interment. We are told that a few years later, when De Saci's obsequies were being celebrated, the voices of the Solitaires were choked with tears, while the nuns

" sang to the end with a gravity which became the subject of astonishment and admiration." [1]

On the occasion of the ceremony for Mère Agnès, while chanting the *In exitu*, it was the turn of the nuns to be overcome, and had not the Messieurs continued, the music would have ended abruptly.

M. de Péréfixe died the same year as Mère Agnès :

" In a transport of lively regret for all he had done against the nuns, whom at the bottom of his heart he had always recognized as innocent." [2]

[1] The singing at Port-Royal was celebrated for its peculiar religious quality, and this was explained by the fact that when novices or postulants entered the monastery from the world without, they were not allowed to sing with the others until their voices had lost the artificial or worldly sound, being sometimes condemned for months to complete silence, while they " learned to listen to themselves, to understand themselves, and to give to their voices a tone of intelligence and expression so faithful to the pronunciation that their chant was in reality a prayer."

[2] Racine, *Abrégé*, p. 212.

Robert Arnauld d'Andilly, a patriarch of eighty-five, was the next to pass away,

" like an olive branch among its shoots." [1]

Most historians, Racine among the number, feel that the history of Port-Royal really ended with the Peace of the Church. And though this was practically true, the period before the final destruction has its own peculiar characteristics. Distinguished more in individuals than as a whole, Port-Royal oppressed was no longer the heroic figure of the lion brought to bay, but rather that of the hunted stag, weary with the long chase, and so dazed as almost to be glad of capture and annihilation. Even before Madame de Longueville's death the King had become restless, pursued by the ever-present thought that while the Jansenists lived his State would be menaced. As M. de Camus wrote, 5th July 1676, to the Abbé de Pontchateau :

" Nothing but a great silence and forgetfulness by the world can save them in this matter. Jansenism is finished—no pretext must be given to bring it up again." [2]

It was Nicole who broke the silence so recommended by M. de Camus, Nicole who, assisted by Arnauld, was the author of the new Letter of the Law, the Book called *The Perpetuity of Faith in the Eucharist* [3]—a defence of the old Catholic tradition as opposed to the new Calvinistic ideas. Although only the Dedicatory Epistle to Pope Clement IX was the work of Arnauld, the *Perpetuity of the Faith* brought him many results, among others a letter from Leibniz, the great philosopher, then a very young man, as well as the first favourable mention he had had for many years from the Sorbonne. It was said that in one town of France alone fifteen persons of different conditions had been converted to Catholicism by

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, v. p. 15.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 151. Madame de Longueville also wrote unceasingly to Madame de Sablé : " Au nom de Dieu, poussez bien M. Arnauld à se taire." In 1668 she reported the desire of M. de Comminges that there should be silence, saying again : " Faites seulement de vostre côté que M. Arnauld ne dise mot du monde " (V. Cousin, *Madame de Sablé*, Letters in Appendix).

[3] The first volume appeared in 1669, and was accompanied by the approbation of 27 prelates and 20 Doctors, Bossuet among the number. The second appeared in 1672 ; the third in 1676.

this book. In Paris, a great many grand personages were induced by it to return to the Roman Catholic Church :

" Port-Royal at this moment," wrote Sainte-Beuve, " thus served by the most direct action the policy of Louis XIV and anticipated Bossuet." [1]

Unfortunately, about the same time, Nicole had been induced to write a letter to the Pope on the subject of the relaxed morality of the Casuists. This act so greatly displeased Louis XIV that, on the death of Madame de Longueville and Cardinal Retz, Nicole thought it best to leave Paris. He therefore crossed the frontier and fled to Brussels. In June following, Arnauld, compromised with Nicole and also suspected by the King of having written against the *Régale*,[2] left Paris in disguise ; and, accompanied by two friends, went to Mons in Belgium, afterwards to Brussels, where he met Nicole, now fifty-four, tired, infirm, and asthmatic. Though fourteen years older, the champion of Jansenism was as indomitable as ever, and to Nicole's plea of feebleness and weariness, he only answered :

" We shall have all Eternity to rest in."

But even these courageous words did not suffice to give the more yielding Jansenist enough strength to persevere. He refused to follow Arnauld to Holland, and thus these two friends *à la mort et à la vie*,[3] after twenty-five years of constant companionship, now separated to meet no more.[4]

[1] *Port-Royal*, iv. p. 445.

[2] The *Régale* was the right enjoyed by Princes of making use of the revenue from vacant prelatures, and of nominating their own candidates to all benefices in the gift of the defunct prelate. The *Régale* had been established in a great many parts of the kingdom. Louis XIV in 1673 declared the practice universal (Besoigne, *Vies des Quatres Evêques*, vol. i. p. 198).

[3] An expression used by Arnauld in a letter of adieu to Nicole, dated 9th August 1679 : " et quelque parti que vous preniez, la petite peine que j'aurois pourrois avoir ne m'empêchera jamais de vous regarder comme mon ami *à la mort et à la vie*."

[4] For some time Nicole wandered about Belgium, and finally, after much manœuvring, he was allowed to return to his native town of Chartres, where he lived under the name of De Bercy. During his exile he continued writing, and at last in May 1683 he returned to Paris, and took up his abode next the convent of La Crèche. There he had a fine library, and some portraits by Champagne of ancient nuns of Port-Royal ; and on certain days of the week he held a kind of Academy in his rooms. At last he took up his pen against Quietism, and while still occupied on the subject, in 1695, he died. Although

In the meantime the destruction of Port-Royal was steadily progressing, M. de Harlai, the new Archbishop, being anything but favourable to the Jansenists. If gossip may be believed, he had several reasons for this animosity. In the first place, Madame de Longueville had always treated him very coldly, and it was not pleasant to be ignored by a princess of her rank and condition. Then, Antoine Arnauld, in a letter to Mère Constance, Superior of the Convent of the Visitation at Angers, believing M. de Harlai to have stirred up trouble in that province, had called him a "monster of Antichrist." This letter had been intercepted, it was said, and fallen into the hands of the Archbishop himself. However, as M. de Harlai was actuated principally by motives of a political bias, his object in all his dealings with Port-Royal may have simply been with a view to pleasing the King, and extinguishing opposition for himself in the Church. The methods of his procedure differed essentially from those M. de Péréfixe had used. While the latter was rude and brusque, this prelate was always most polite and amiable.

Some time after his appointment, M. de Harlai paid a visit to Port-Royal des Champs. Very courteously he intimated to Mère Angélique de St. Jean, who the previous year had been elected Abbess, that it was the King's wish they should receive no more prospective nuns until the number under her charge should have been reduced to fifty *Professes de chœur*, ordering her therefore to dismiss the present postulantes, also remarking casually that the King desired she should send away what pupils there were, and that from that time forward no more were to be received.

Although Mère Angèlique was fully aware that words were useless,

"I threw myself on my knees," she related, "to beg for those poor girls," etc.[1]

Finally, being driven to declare a reason for his action,

"The King," said M. de Harlai, "wishes to rid his ears of

generally liked and respected, Nicole's lack of popularity at Port-Royal is shown by the fact that after his death they forgot to take his heart to the Champs.

[1] *Relation de la Mère Angélique de St. Jean.*

the continual cry, 'Ces Messieurs! Ces Messieurs!' . . . It is the Republic of Port-Royal which must be suppressed." [1]

After having so agreeably and pleasantly dealt the death-blow to Mère Angélique and her nuns, the Archbishop, as he entered his carriage to return to Paris, suavely told M. de Saci that it was the King's intention that neither he nor any of the other ecclesiastics should remain longer at the Champs. Advising him, therefore, to retire at once, he graciously accorded him and his companions fifteen days in which to effect their retreat.

The day after the Archbishop's visit, the Gardener-Solitaire known as "Mercier" was the first to leave Port-Royal. The duty of this humble hermit at Les Granges had been for eight years to cultivate the gardens and the vines, the product of which, together with fish from the pond, was sold for the benefit of the monastery. Yet Mercier of Les Granges, illustrious by birth, fortune, and talents, had been one of the most brilliant men of France, his life a series of surprising adventures and incidents. Since the age of seventeen, when through M. de Rebours he had met Singlin, it had taken this penitent — Sebastien Joseph de Coislin, Abbé de Ponchateau, who at seven years of age was possessed of three abbeys and already tonsured—twenty-seven years to sow his wild oats, and finally put himself under the rule of true contrition of heart.

"The life of M. de Pontchateau was traversed by so many different events that it is difficult to unravel them." [2]

After meeting Singlin, he visited Port-Royal for a short time, but the world tempting him again, he suddenly left, and directed his steps towards Rome, without even saying good-bye to his friends in the Desert. Thus his life of adventure began, one which was crossed and re-crossed by fleeting connections with the Jansenists. Since the period of the Provincial Letters, when he had been active in connection with Port-Royal, he had corresponded with M. Singlin, who advised him to leave his present mode of life and enter a monastery. This he avowed he would like to do, but

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, v. p. 168.

[2] This short account of the life of M. de Pontchateau is taken from that written by Beaubrun, and given by Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, vol. vi. pp. 302–336. Also *Recueil de Plusieurs Pièces*, p. 410.

could not yet manage. "Do not say can-not," said Singlin, "but *will* not." These words aroused M. de Pontchateau to definite action. On the Peace of the Church he retired to Port-Royal des Champs, where he lived in a little maisonette with one large room on the ground-floor, from which a staircase led to an attic above. As M. de Pontchateau had relinquished all his possessions on adopting the life of a Solitaire, even giving his magnificent library to Arnauld, the treasures of the room below consisted in

"tapestry of matting, with the picture of St. Arsène on it, a great wooden cross, several sentences taken from the Scriptures, some geographical charts, a few portraits, and a view of the Grand Chartreuse."

The favourite duty of this original character was that of digging graves for the nuns.

"I leave it to M. de Saci," he said, "to exhort them to death; but to inter them properly, no one understands it better than I." [1]

On leaving the Granges, the morning after M. de Harlai's visit, M. de Pontchateau went abroad, and from that time on took long journeys in the interest of the Jansenists, sometimes living with Arnauld in Brussels, sometimes elsewhere, disguising his identity under all sorts of names. Finally, after giving himself up to great austerity in a Belgian convent, this brother of a Duchess of France died as plain M. Fleuri in the house of a churchwarden of St. Gervais.

From M. de Harlai's dispersion of the Solitaires in 1679, the history of Port-Royal des Champs is monotonous and grey; and until its final ruin, its story is one of gradual extinguishing —of old age and death, with no influx of new blood. The only light and shade in the picture was furnished by the devotion of several Confessors—M. le Tourneux, M. Eustace, M. Bocquillot—and of the poet Santeuil. To the latter, a Canon of St. Victor in Paris, Port-Royal owed much. Taking a great fancy to the monastery in the country on a chance visit there, he returned again and again to cheer by his wit and good-humour the few hermits clinging to the place. He himself admitted that he was a little mad,[2] and certainly

[1] *Vies Interessantes et Édifiantes*, vol. i. p. 378.

[2] "Je suis tel que vous me voyez, mais le Christianisme ne défend d'être fou."

his nature was, in its frankness, rude joviality, and comical devotion, one absolutely foreign to anything Port-Royal had previously known. He had a sincere admiration for the nuns, whose demeanour under insults and unkindness so aroused his devotion that he took them as his models and spoke of them as those " holy women," those " angels." The atmosphere of the Monastery seemed to strike deep into his soul, for, as he wrote Arnauld in 1694 :

" I have just come back from Port-Royal, and in entering, your letter was given me. I have walked on the tombs of yours and my best friends, who teach me more from their tombs than all the troup of Jesuits from their pulpits." [1]

[1] Dinouart, *Santoliana*, p. 273. Santeuil was always among those ecclesiastics who on fête days went to Port-Royal des Champs and joined in the processions and celebrations—the only joys of the last days of the Abbey. See *Nécrologe*.

CHAPTER IV

PORT-ROYAL IN CONFLICT WITH PHILOSOPHY

" Paganisme immortel, es-tu mort ? On le dit ;
Mais Pan tout bas s'en moque, et la Sirène en rit."

ARNAULD had not kept silent in his exile. His body was necessarily quiet ; not so his brain and pen. He wrote continually, and, in spite of warnings, could not resist discussing the very questions which were like red rags to that royal bull, Louis XIV.[1] Naturally, his indiscretions reacted on Port-Royal : he not only imperilled the Monastery by his writings, but he provoked many other disasters to individuals by the imprudence of sending them letters and books, thus directing upon them suspicion and persecution.

Fortunately the place of his retreat remained undiscoverable by the royal agents. As Boileau said :

" The King is too lucky to find M. Arnauld." [2]

At this moment Arnauld's active mind suddenly became fixed on another matter, and with ardour he threw himself into a controversy, destined to be famous, with Père Malebranche, the disciple of Descartes.

When Arnauld was studying at the Sorbonne, the mind of the moment was full of Descartes, who was alarming scientists by going further than his illustrious predecessors, Bacon, Galileo, and Kepler. In Descartes' student days, Galileo, who had also tried to reconcile Science and Religion, and had held that Geometry should be the basis for all investi-

[1] Mère Angélique had been almost contemptuous of Arnauld's uncontrollable belief in discussion : Fontaine relates that she once said to him : " If those people should give themselves up to the Truth, you would at once believe that it was your fine writings which had accomplished it ; and it is not this which the grace that you uphold teaches you " (*Mémoires*, ii. p. 94).

[2] *Vie de Messire Antoine Arnauld*, 1782, ii. p. 194.

gation into Nature and Science,[1] was still influencing thought, while Harvey, following in his footsteps, had just published his great discoveries on the circulation of the blood, and the whole world was pulsating with him and others in their extension of the knowledge of the physical and scientific laws which govern the universe. Descartes was among the first to welcome Harvey's discovery of circulation as the initial step towards the reduction of vital phenomena to physical laws. The result of Descartes' own study in the Book of Life was to teach him apparently the one truth: *cogito, ergo sum*: I think, hence I am. From this he deduced the existence of God.

Naturally all this appealed to Arnauld, for it was a passion with him to reason, and as long as the scientist and philosopher did not conflict with religion, he felt that to Descartes "the world owed a method of reasoning and an enthusiasm which sounded the knell of the old scholastic learning," against which he and the Port-Royal scholars had long been striving. During this period at the Sorbonne, Arnauld was fortunate enough to see a manuscript copy of Descartes' *Meditations*, and, after reading it carefully, while making four objections to its reasoning, he at the same time declared that there was an exact accord between Descartes' arguments and those of St. Augustine, who, he asserted, also sustained the premise: *cogito, ergo sum*.[2] As theologian, Arnauld wished to reconcile Descartes' definition of Substance with the dogma of the Real Presence.[3] Descartes, on his part, did not combat Arnauld because he felt they were striving for the same thing, *i.e.* to refute the vulgar doctors of the schools, and above all the Jesuits.

It was during the Fronde that all Port-Royal became imbued with the excitement of the new philosophy. Speculation was in the air, and for a time subjects of scientific import took precedence over even religious questions. While the repairs and rebuilding of the Monastery were going on, an hundred men were lodged at Vaumurier under the hospitality

[1] J. H. Bridges, *New Calendar of Great Men*. Frederic Harrison, p. 601.

[2] In his book, *Des Vrayes et des Fausses Idées*, p. 8.

[3] "For," he wrote to M. du Vaucel, 13th Nov. 1692, "it must be one of two things: either to despair of proving it by reason, or to allow that M. Descartes has proved it better than any one else."

and direction of the Duc de Luines. Meeting together for their meals, these men of brains and mental activity, albeit engaged in physical labour, naturally were drawn into deep discussions. Their leader was the host, author of a translation of Descartes' *Meditations*, and naturally much preoccupied with matters therein treated. That the Duc de Luines' version of the *Meditations* remains to this day a standard one, was due to the careful education he had received in philosophy from one of the Masters of the Petites Écoles, M. du Chesne, a very learned man, who knew how to impart his knowledge to his pupil. All talk between the guests at Vaumurier turned thus on scientific inquiry, and speculation was warmed and excited by the wonder of the discoveries then revolutionizing ideas and methods. Like the rest of the educated world, the thoughts of these workers turned eagerly to the question as to whether the sun was a mass of particles, whether animals were machines, etc. etc. The theory of Automatons was a part of Descartes' philosophy. Other philosophers, Montaigne among the number, had tried to prove that animals used Reason better than man. Charron went even further than Montaigne, and claimed that he saw more difference between man and man, than between man and beast.[1] Later on, to find arguments against spirituality, Voltaire enjoyed comparing beasts with men to the disadvantage of the latter.

It was from a religious standpoint that Port-Royal combated the idea of animals possessing reason. It seemed impious to them to elevate the beast to a level with man. When, therefore, Descartes brought forward his theory of Automatons—*i.e.* that animals are simple machines, obeying the general laws of mechanics — Port-Royal followed him to the extent of considering animals as deprived of intelligence, sensibility, even of life itself. The whole action of the dumb creatures, they believed, resulted from the moving of springs—they were clocks, composed of wheels and more or less complicated mechanism, which only acted when wound up. Even Pascal was at accord with Descartes on this point, and soon Port-Royal had become so devoted to the Cartesian theory that it was absolutely without pity for animals. It seemed

[1] "Il (le sage) est autant pardessus le commun des hommes que celui du commun est pardessus les bêtes."

nothing to them to whip a dog, or to dissect him alive—the poor thing had no feeling.[1]

A few Solitaires there were, however, who stoutly opposed this idea. These were men of sense and experience, who in the hunt and elsewhere had had varied proofs of the sagacity and sensibility of their dumb friends, To discredit the theory of Automatons, the Duc de Liancourt, himself a great hunter, told the following story—one which La Fontaine afterward used for his fable of " The Two Rats, the Fox, and the Egg."

" I have two dogs over there," said the Duke, " each of whom has his day of turning the spit. One of them, becoming tired of this, hid one day when they were about to fetch him to his work, and they had to take his comrade in his stead. This dog, however, cried and beckoned with his tail for them to follow him. Going to the barn, he unearthed the other dog and pulled him out of his hiding place."

" Are these automatons ? " triumphantly asked the Duke.[2]

Writing one day to her daughter *apropos* of Cardinal Retz, who, like Madame de Grignan herself, was a strong Cartesian, Madame de Sévigné said :

" Talk a little to the Cardinal of your machines ; of the machines who love, who have predilections ; of machines that are jealous, of machines that are afraid. Avaunt, avaunt, you make fun of us, Descartes never pretended that he could make us believe it." [3]

But the theory of Automatons was, after all, a mere bagatelle, and not the real issue of the sympathy between Descartes and Port-Royal. The point in his philosophy which undoubtedly most interested the *Messieurs* of Port-Royal was a statement contained in the last chapter of the *Discours de la Méthode,* wherein was a forecast of the Positive philosophy of the future, as

" resting not on scholastic subtleties, but on a solid basis of mathematical and biological knowledge, and directed to the practical service of man." [4]

Thus Descartes' spirit and method of thought, the geometric, being also that of Pascal, was quite logically akin to that of Port-Royal.

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal,* ii. p. 316.
[2] Du Fossé, *Mémoires,* ii. p. 470.
[3] Lettre du 23 Mars 1672.
[4] J. H. Bridges, *New Calendar of Great Men,* p. 485.

Pascal was Port-Royal's first philosopher. When De Saci learned that the great mathematician was coming to the Champs, he rather dreaded meeting the brilliant man of the world of whose personal charm and scientific acquisitions he had heard much. His only safeguard against the disturbing attraction this man so endowed by nature, so deep-read in all the secrets of the universe, would necessarily exert upon him, was, he knew,

"the holy knowledge to be found in the Scriptures and the Fathers."[1]

On arrival at Port-Royal, however, Pascal, like most great people, seemed very simple and quite like ordinary mortals. Yet, as was his custom, De Saci at once began talking on the subject which, as he supposed, lay nearest his new penitent's heart: philosophy. He then further courted discussion by begging Pascal to talk freely about Epictetus and Montaigne, confessedly the former's favourite authors.

At the time of this memorable interview, which came to be known as "the Interview on Montaigne and Epictetus," De Saci was forty-one, Pascal ten years younger. De Saci based his arguments on St. Augustine, while his opponent rested his on Epictetus and Montaigne, and it was astonishing to see how, by their different paths, each arrived at the same ultimate conclusion.

"And," continues the *Relation*, "as De Saci listened to Pascal's exposition of Epictetus and Montaigne, he believed himself to be living in a new country and hearing a new language, and repeated to himself the words of St. Augustine:

"'O God of Truth! those who know these subtleties of reasoning, are they therefore more agreeable?'"

Acknowledging his astonishment at Pascal's skill in turning things about, he further remarked that it was not every one who knew, like Pascal, the secret of extracting such sage reflections from what he had read. The outcome of the interview[2] was therefore mutual surprise and admiration, for Pascal, on his side, admired De Saci's clear mind, logical conclusions, the solidity of his reasoning, his penetrating piety. Pascal,

[1] Fontaine, *Mémoires*, ii. p. 55.

[2] For this interview, see Fontaine, *Mémoires*, ii. pp. 56–73.

said the latter, resembled those clever doctors who, by their adroit manner of preparing the most deadly poisons, knew how to extract from them the most efficacious remedies.

De Saci is also credited with a famous remark concerning the old school and the new :

" Having himself usurped authority in the church, it was only just that Aristotle should in his turn have been superseded by another tyrant. Descartes was like a thief who had just killed another thief, and taken his spoils from him."

" So much the better," he added humorously, " the more deaths, the less enemies."

Pascal, however, saw further than Arnauld into the consequences of Descartes' reasoning. He followed it out to its logical conclusion, which he found to be not God, but negation. It led, he said, to rational truths alone, and, extracting from Reason its inherent quality, did not teach Jesus Christ. Refusing, therefore, to endorse Descartes' purely mathematical and material arguments, he tried to prove the old idea that, if for no other reason personal interest calls upon one to adhere to Christian doctrine.[1]

Of all the Port-Royalists, Arnauld and Nicole were the most enthusiastic Cartesians. They employed his method in the composition of their General Grammar and Logic, and in the preface to these books candidly confessed that they had borrowed some reflections

" from the books of a celebrated philosopher of the century."

Port-Royal had never actually come into conflict with philosophy, however, until during Antoine Arnauld's exile in Brussels, when the untiring controversialist was impelled to combat the principles of Père Malebranche, the pupil and disciple of Descartes, who, taking only the metaphysics of Descartes, carried it further than his master into exaggerated idealism. Realising the consequences of this, Arnauld, as well as his fellow-theologian of another camp, Bossuet, cried halt.

[1] Pascal thought with Descartes that beasts were only automatons, but, says the *Recueil* (p. 472), " he could not suffer his manner of explaining the formation of things, and he often said : ' I cannot pardon Descartes ; in all his philosophy, he should certainly have wished to dispense with God, but he could not prevent himself from running up against him in order to have the world set in motion ; after that, he no longer has anything to do with God."

The evolution of Père Malebranche from the Oratory to Philosophy was interesting.

One day in 1664, passing a book-shop in the Rue St. Jacques, he had chanced to open Descartes' *Treatise on Man.*

" Reading it with transports which made his heart beat," [1] from that hour he abandoned himself exclusively to the study of Descartes. The result of his ten years' absorption was six thick volumes, entitled *La Récherche de la Vérité* (The Search after Truth).

On the publication of this work, Arnauld at first esteemed it, and attached himself to the author, although they did not meet personally until four years later (1679). When finally they did come together, at the house of the Marquis de Roucy, De Tréville, Père Quesnel, and Le Vassor being present, a lively conversation ensued. Soon, however, it was discovered that personal intercourse between the two men was impossible. Malebranche's peculiarity was that he could not be interrupted when talking, while it was impossible for Arnauld not to break in. They, therefore, agreed to carry on any discussion by letter, and parted good friends.[2]

When in 1680 Malebranche sent Arnauld in exile his next effort of the kind, a treatise on the Nature of Grace, all sympathy between him and the Jansenist was lost. In reply Arnauld wrote his

Traité des Vraies et des Fausses Idées,

in which he was so cruelly hard on Malebranche as to draw forth a protest from his friends.

In Malebranche Arnauld combated the very basis of his system, which was that we see all things in God. Like Faydit, the Jansenist exclaimed :

" Lui qui voit tout en Dieu, n'y voit pas qu'il est fou ! "

Malebranche retorted by calling Arnauld *un esprit chagrin—un vieux docteur*—accusing him of dogmatizing.

Speaking one day of the quarrel between himself and Arnauld, Malebranche protested that the former had not understood him.

[1] Fontenelle, *Vie de Nicolas Malebranche.*
[2] Blampignon, *Étude sur Malebranche,*

"And who then do you wish to understand you, mon Père," replied Boileau, "if M. Arnauld does not?"

To make a very long matter short, the end of the celebrated dispute was that Arnauld remained victor in his party, Malebranche in his. Of the *Récherche de la Vérité* Fontenelle said:

"There reigns in this work a great art of putting abstract ideas in the light, of joining them together, and strengthening them by their union." [1]

What really annoyed Arnauld with regard to Malebranche was the latter's tendency to philosophize against experience. According to Arnauld, God has a general design to save all men, but this indeterminate design can only be realized by occasional causes:

"Suppose," he said, "an organ in a church. The general will of God is represented by the wind blown through the pipes, the air which circulates around at will. But there is need of an organist to determine this or that sound. The organist in this case is Jesus Christ." [2]

And thus, finding Philosophy to ignore the Divine Organist, Port-Royal, as Pascal had predicted, was finally obliged to break definitely with Philosophy as being inimical to Religion.

[1] *Vie de Nicolas Malebranche.*
[2] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, v. p. 433.

CHAPTER V

ARNAULD'S DEATH. HIS SUCCESSORS: QUESNEL, DU GUET, AND BOILEAU

"Quelle mésintelligence entre l'esprit et le cœur! Le philosophe vit mal avec tous ses préceptes; et le politique rempli de vues et de réflexions ne sait pas se gouverner."

LA BRUYÈRE

THE controversy with Malebranche was Arnauld's last great exploit, barring one other matter in which he allowed himself to be interested, and which contrary to his usual custom had the effect of pleasing the King. This was the quarrel between King James II of England, guest of France, and William of Orange. Arnauld wrote a book against the latter and in favour of fidelity to kings which so gratified Louis XIV that he not only allowed it to be printed in France, but had copies of it circulated abroad.[1] Arnauld's action did not, however, secure the return of its author to his native land. In 1685, he was rejoiced by the coming of two friends to join him: Père Quesnel and Père Du Guet, men who in the battle so nearly at its close were to be his disciples and successors. Both were priests of the Oratory; both had been driven away from their institution by the change in its policy with regard to education brought about by the Chapter of 1684, which had ordered the adoption of a curriculum of studies contrary to sane and recent methods of thought—a curriculum in which Jansenius and Descartes were branded together as equally pernicious in their respective fields of theology and philosophy.

For a long time Père Quesnel had been in sympathy with the Jansenists. Having originally signed the Formulary

[1] *Vie de Messire Antoine Arnauld*, vol. ii. p. 283.

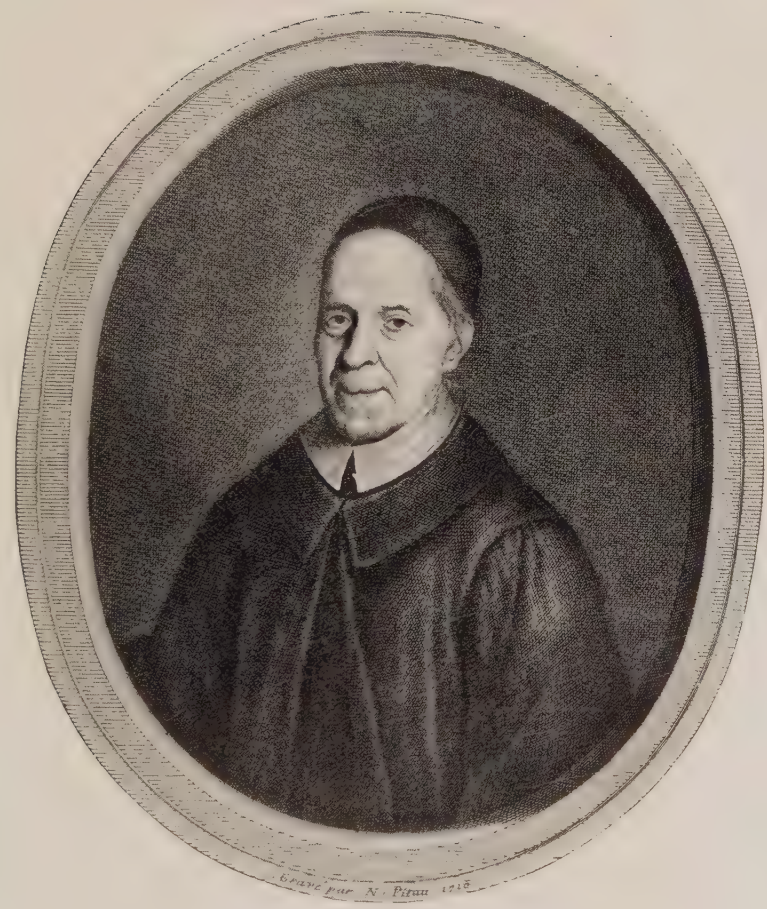
at the time of the Peace of the Church, he afterwards sent a written Retraction to Port-Royal, and became more or less identified with Arnauld and the other Port-Royalists.[1] It was he, in fact, who had sent Arnauld word a few years before of the action of Malebranche. When, therefore, in 1678, M. de Harlai took hold of the Oratory, avowedly to "purge it of Jansenism," Quesnel's future fate was only a matter of time, for six years later, at the definite division, he and Du Guet at once fled to Brussels. Here they were received with joy by the exile, but ill-health soon forced Du Guet to leave Brussels, and thus Quesnel, twenty years Arnauld's junior, was left alone with his master.

During the following nine years of their companionship, Quesnel, a true disciple, was very active. In analyzing his character, we find him in the opinion of contemporaries to have been on the whole serious, sincere, dogmatic, but without charm. Sainte-Beuve remarks that, while Quesnel participated in Arnauld's moral virtues, he emphasized his faults.[2] Like his chief, he was a prolific writer, and he especially excelled in the epistolary art. Gay and amusing, there was nothing morose or gloomy in his letters, and they showed his quality of always trying to look on the bright side of things for himself and his friends, counting his blessings, as it were, and forgetting to add up his miseries.

Arnauld and Quesnel lived tranquilly at Brussels until 1690, when, a dispute on some question or other arising in the Louvain University, the Governor of the Low Countries was obliged to ask Arnauld to retire from the Belgian capital for a while. Thus, accompanied by Père Quesnel and one or two other friends, he set out once more on his wanderings. Shortly afterwards, France had one more gleam of hope that at last Arnauld would be allowed to return, for his nephew, M. de Pomponne, himself exiled ostensibly because the King

[1] Fénelon wrote to Père Quesnel: "Yours is a terrible position, my Father, and I tremble the more for your sake the less you tremble for your own. Sooner than sign the Formulary you have fled to Holland, and the mass of your party, having signed it, thereby declares you a rebel against the Church. In return, you curse them for a crowd of cowardly perjured hypocrites, but they do not cease to admire you, call you their oracle and the Athanasius of our days, while you are forced to bless them as your children, as the only remnant faithful to your cause." (*Viscount St. Cyres, François de Fénelon*, p. 233.)

[2] *Port-Royal*, v. p. 483.



PASQUIER QUESNEL

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY N. PÉTAU

had not found him clever enough, but in reality, on account of his Jansenist connections, was now graciously recalled to the Court and his former duties as Secretary of State. But the re-established nephew's diplomatic endeavours to ensure his uncle's pardon were in vain.

"Let him come back, if he will promise not to write any more," said the King, well knowing that Arnauld would write while life lasted."

Therefore, returning after a year's absence to Brussels as the safest place, Arnauld concealed himself more closely than ever in an obscure part of the city, never stepping out of his little house except to take exercise in his garden surrounded by high walls. His life was thus sad enough, and Death, when it came, could not have been very unwelcome. The second Sunday in August 1694, Antoine Arnauld, called the Great, passed away tranquilly, surrounded by the friends of his foreign home, and attended by the pious Curé of St. Catherine in Brussels.

Joseph de Maistre asserts that Arnauld died in the arms of the friend who, since Nicole's desertion, had been his faithful companion, Quesnel. One of the latter's finest letters is that announcing the death of Arnauld :

"He is in the bosom of the Truth which he has loved uniquely. He draws from the eternal fountain the Grace which he has so faithfully defended."

The place of sepulchre was kept hidden for many years, but Arnauld's heart was taken to Port-Royal des Champs by one of his friends, M. Ruth d'Ans. Santeuil, asked to write his epitaph, dilated on the pride of the foreign soil in possessing the bones of this man, adding that the Divine Love had transported his heart on wings of fire back to the place from whence nothing had ever been able to separate it.[1]

[1] Boileau's epitaph is the most celebrated. The following is a rough translation :

At the foot of this altar of clumsiest structure,
In a vile bier pent up, minus pomp and splendour,
Lies the most learnèd mortal that ever writ a line,
Arnauld, who by Christ Himself informed in grace divine,
Combating for the Church, has in the Church's bourne
Suffered more than one outrage, by many curses torn.

And, now after the death of the head of the Second Port-Royal, dominating his period even as St. Cyran and Arnauld did theirs, Père Quesnel may be said to have been the centre of the Third and last generation. The argument of his book, called *La Défense de l'Église Romaine*, satirized by Joseph de Maistre as showing more than ever the extraordinary heresy of the Jansenists, was on the lines which post-Arnauld-Jansenists universally adopted: that of denying that in condemning the Five Propositions the Popes intended to condemn the doctrine of Grace.

Clement XI had at first approved Quesnel's *Réflexions Morales sur le Nouveau Testament*, dedicated to the Cardinal de Noailles, but on its condemnation being demanded at Rome by the Jesuits, he retracted his approbation and censured it. It was on the strength of this action that Louis XIV afterward demanded that last and most famous silencer of Jansenism, the celebrated Constitution called *Bulle Unigenitus*,[1] whereby one hundred and one propositions in Quesnel's work, most of which were absolutely inoffensive, were declared heretical.[2] No wonder, therefore, that Père Quesnel was accused of being the author of the "largest theological apple of discord of the eighteenth century."

Quesnel's excuse for his own unenviable reputation was a counter-accusation against his antagonists: he did as he did because they were what they were. Whatever Quesnel's excuse for his actions, his name has inevitably become linked with the last quarrels of Jansenism. This controversialist representative of Port-Royal was unfortunate in not having been connected with either the romantic, literary, poetic, or tender side of a movement which purposely ignored the gentler side of life, and to have had disassociated from his memory all the human element. It was also his fate, as that of his friend and master, Arnauld, to die in exile. Never returning to France, he died in Amsterdam in 1719.

If in the Third Port-Royal Quesnel stood for the active and aggressive influence, Du Guet represented the moderating, gentle power. His was an altogether more lovable and attractive personality, the last of those tender priests who attached themselves to the stern practices and austerities of Port-Royal, standing by during exile and persecution without

[1] Reinach, *Orpheus*, p. 502. [2] Made in 1713.

losing an atom of the grace and sweetness natural to them. They were, in fact, Jansenist types, M. Hamon being the most prominent example of St. François de Sales.

Du Guet came too late into the fold of Port-Royal to actually live at Les Champs, and his connection was originally brought about solely through a correspondence with the distinguished friend of Madame de Longueville, Mlle. de Vertus. It was before entering the Oratory, while making his noviciate in the *Visitation* at the time of the Peace of the Church, that at twenty years of age Du Guet became acquainted with Arnauld and Nicole. Ordained priest in 1677, three years later he had already become celebrated for his sermons, when ill-health interfered and caused a pause in his career, which in 1684 was entirely changed by the decision of the Chapter regarding education. It was not without much prayer and struggle that he finally decided to give up the Oratory altogether, and to leave Paris secretly with Quesnel. His whereabouts were unknown even to his own family. Had Port-Royal still been possible, he would have gone to the Desert—as it was, he closed his doors to all the world, and led a life of solitude.[1]

Through Du Guet's own letters we learn the details of this period, for during these years, which he called "dead," the voluntary recluse did not cease corresponding with some of the great ladies who had been under his spiritual direction: Mlle. de Vertus, Madame de Fontpertuis, the Duchesse d'Epernon. He spread abroad "in secret on a thousand sides" the benefit of his letters and counsels, which also reached out to nuns of religious houses. These letters seem very characteristic of Du Guet, and yet it is impossible through them to divine much of one whose human interests were lost in the contemplation of a heavenly vision. What man indifferent to life, its joys, its ills, its contrasts, could write in so playful a vein on details of the health of his correspondents or his own, sending recipes and advice, even allowing his "dead" mind to rest on the best method of making tea, which beverage he considered more proper to the stomach of Madame des Rieux than coffee or chocolate!

At last, after five years, M. de Harlai removed his interdiction, and Du Guet was able to come out of hiding and live

[1] He disappeared from Paris definitely in February 1685.

openly in Paris among his host of friends and admirers, pledging himself, however, to Père La Chaise not to write on religious subjects.

In his ordinary life a St. François de Sales, Du Guet nevertheless showed his Jansenist leanings in counsel, his exhortations being sweetened by no tenderness or subterfuge, and strong with the strength of Truth. But with all his gifts, he never seemed to quite realize the greatest that was in him, for although Voltaire considered him one of the finest writers of the Jansenist party, not one of his thirty volumes is a real masterpiece. Perhaps his best claim to Port-Royal remembrance was the influence he unconsciously exerted on penitents, for though rather more sweet than stern, it was seemingly very real and healthy. Du Guet has been called

"the most amiable and distinguished of Port-Royal's first cousins, the last of a long line." [1]

Although the place of Nicolas Boileau-Despreaux, another friend and admirer of Arnauld, in the Port-Royal portrait gallery, is essentially that of the friend and companion of Racine, he still had a value there quite his own, and belonged to it especially through the latter part of his life, when Religion became to him something more than a theory. In his verses he practically avowed himself a "Molino-Jansenist," though never implicated in any of the quarrels on Grace.[2]

Fifteenth child of a Master of Rolls, Nicolas Boileau had actually not only been early destined for the ecclesiastical profession, but tonsured. Disliking his course of theology at the Sorbonne, he became an advocate, and on losing his father gave up the law to live on a small patrimony and devote himself to letters. One day shortly after the Peace of the Church, President Lamoignon invited several persons to dine with him at Auteuil, and at this dinner-table Boileau met Arnauld and Nicole for the first time. He was greatly prepossessed in favour of Arnauld as the adversary of the False in theology and the author of the *Frequent Communion*, while on his part Arnauld was attracted to Despreaux as the man who had pre-

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, v. p. 514.

[2] "A peine du limon où le vice m'engage,
J'arrache un pied timide, et sors en m'agitant,
Que l'autre m'y reporte, et s'embourbe à l'instant."
Epître III. à M. Arnauld.

vented Racine from publishing his second letter. Without understanding very much of poetry, Arnauld yet found Boileau not only to possess all the qualities that a poet should have, but to be besides a man of fine mind and morals. The fruit of this meeting was the famous *Arrêt Burlesque*,[1] a satire on the quarrel of Arnauld *versus* the University in its battle against the teaching of anything except on the old traditional lines. On the one side, Aristotle and the University; on the other, Arnauld and Descartes.

Boileau's next attention to Arnauld was his *Third Epistle* apropos of the *Perpetuity of the Faith*, and called *Sur la Mauvaise Honte. Mauvaise Honte*, or shyness, the poet considered as the source of all vice, all crime. The story goes that the author of the *Third Epistle* was non-Jansenist enough to rise very late, and that he was in bed one morning when he recited his poem to Arnauld, who had come to see him at rather an early hour. As rapidly and with fine fervour Boileau was pouring forth his smoothly flowing lines, Arnauld became more and more absorbed and excited: at last, as the poet delivered these words with the proper expression:

> "Avant qu'à nos erreurs le Ciel nous abandonne,
> Profitons de l'instant que de grâce il nous donne,
> Hâtons-nous, le temps fuit, et nous traine avec soi:
> Le moment où je parle est déjà loin de moi!"

rising abruptly from his seat, the Doctor rushed three or four times round the room as if to catch the fleeting moment![2]

Boileau being too infirm in his later years to go to Court, Racine used to read his fellow-Historian's satires to the King. Among others, he bravely read aloud Boileau's epitaph on the Grand Arnauld, and the King must have winced to hear the despised Jansenist called by his own officer, "The most learned mortal who has ever written."

In his last writings, Boileau became more and more Jansenistic. He inveighed against the opera and novels, and in his *Satire des Femmes* he showed the bias of the orphan who

[1] Composed in August 1671.

[2] Rough translation:

> Ere Heaven for our errors us coldly forsake,
> Come profit by the instant which in grace it lets us take.
> Oh, hasten on! Time flies, and drags us in its flight:
> This moment as I speak already fades from sight.

has never known its mother, and who despises the sex because he is ignorant of it. Arnauld, however, defended this satire, and, in fact, held the same views.[1]

The Twelfth *Epître*, called "Sur l'Amour de Dieu" (On the Love of God), was said to be a direct outcome of Pascal's Tenth Provincial, and the most thoroughly Jansenistic of all Boileau's poems. It was a protest against the Casuistic idea of one's duty to God, an author of the sect having announced the fact that a Christian is not obliged to love God.

This poem brought Boileau much attention, and occasioned a great many good stories at his expense, which the poet himself was only too ready to recount.

"Racine asked my gardener one day," he related, "if there were always so many people coming to see me."

"Yes, sir," replied the gardener, "it is the Love of God which brings them all." [2]

It was said the destruction of Port-Royal struck a knife into Boileau's heart, for to the disillusioned satirist everything seemed gone, even good taste and poetry,[3] and there was nothing left to live for. At last, the 17th March 1711, he gave up the struggle, and passed away in the house of his Confessor in the cloister of Notre-Dame.

And thus, leaving a world for which he had lost his relish, he might have exclaimed in the words of his First Satire, published over fifty years before :

> "Pour moi qu'en santé même, un autre monde étonne
> Qui crois l'âme immortelle, et que c'est Dieu qui tonne,
> Il vaut mieux pour jamais me bannir de ce lieu.
> Je me retire donc. Adieu, Paris, adieu !"

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[1] See Arnauld's letter to Perrault. Boileau was most grateful to Arnauld, and expressed his admiration for this "grand personage" everywhere and to everybody.

[2] Boileau's Epître XI. is addressed to this gardener.

[3] In a letter to M. Maucroix written six years before his death, Boileau said : "Que j'aurais le plaisir de vous embrasser et à déposer entre vos mains les chagrins que me donne tous les jours le mauvais goût de la plupart de nos écrivains modernes !"

CHAPTER VI

THE LITERARY GLORY OF PORT-ROYAL—PASCAL AND RACINE: *LES PENSÉES* AND *ATHALIE*

" Je blâme également et ceux qui prennent parti de louer l'homme, et ceux qui le blâmer, et ceux qui prennent de se divertir : et je ne puis approuver que ceux qui *cherchent en gémissant.*"

Pensées

" Où sont les traits que tu lances,
Grand Dieu, dans ton juste courroux ?
N'est-tu plus le Dieu jaloux ?
N'est-tu plus le Dieu des vengeances ? "

Athalie

BEFORE telling the sad story of Port-Royal's downfall and destruction, it would seem well to fortify our hearts by a thought of her glory. But this is a subject which has caused much discussion, and on which there are as many different opinions as writers on the subject: from Gerbier, who called Port-Royal " the nursery of great men " ; [1] Victor Cousin, who asserted it to be

" perhaps the place of all the world which has enclosed in the smallest space the greatest amount of virtue and genius, in the persons of admirable men and women worthy of them " ; [2]

to the modern M. Reinach, who asserts that the great figures we have tried to describe

" still command respect by the intensity of their moral life, the gravity of their thought, their tranquil courage. . . . These *Messieurs* of Port-Royal dominated the baseness and corruption of their time." [3]

[1] L'Abbé Grégoire. *Les Ruines de Port-Royal des Champs*, p. 110.
[2] *Du Vrai du Beau et du Bien*, p. 234.
[3] *Orpheus, Histoire générale des Religions*, p. 500.

Bringing the matter down to a more personal and yet more impersonal point of view, it has been disputed as to whether the real glory of Port-Royal lay in Pascal or Racine—the *Pensées* or *Athalie*. Morally and literarily, it would seem to lie in both these men as represented in their works. Pascal and Racine — these are the names that stand out life-size in the picture of Port-Royal, with Mère Angélique, St. Cyran, and Jansenius.

It was said to be the tremendous impression made upon Pascal by the Miracle of the Sacred Thorn which changed his rallying mood of the Provincials into a deeper and more highly religious strata, resulting in those remarkable fragments called the *Pensées*. As any rate, in the middle of the Nineteenth Letter, it appears that the attention of the writer was suddenly diverted from the subject of the Casuists and their subtleties to a broader field. His own arguments had shown him that the world needed an Apology for Religion itself—a conclusive demonstration of the true meaning of the word.[1] Therefore, with his usual promptitude, Pascal immediately put down the half-finished argument, and began to think out a work which should be a thousand times greater and nobler than the writing still fresh from his pen. Like all genius, he had progressed through himself, and throwing off the ladders by which he had climbed from one plane to another, he now stood on the one which was to prove his last earthly progression.

For several months he wrote nothing, but spent his time in meditation, trusting to his wonderful memory to guard the thoughts which occurred to his brooding mind. In the meantime, his friends of Port-Royal were quite aware that something was stirring in his brain, and with impatience they awaited the result. Finally, unable longer to control their eager curiosity, they implored Pascal to divulge the scheme of his proposed treatise.[2] To accede to their desire, Pascal accordingly began with the greatest care to draw up the heads of a discourse which he planned to deliver on a certain day. The lecture took place, Sainte-Beuve estimates, any time between 1657 and 1659, probably in 1658. It lasted over two hours, and at its close, Étienne Périer tells us,[3]

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, iii. p. 312.
[2] Preface to the *Pensées*.
[3] *Ibid.*

those persons who listened to Pascal's words — and his hearers were all learned in the matter discussed—avowed they had never heard anything more beautiful, stronger, more touching, or more convincing. There is no record as to who these friends were, but Sainte-Beuve is the authority for a strong conjecture that the audience consisted of the choicest souls of Port-Royal, and also that it took place at Port-Royal de Paris itself. In his Preface to the *Pensées*, Etienne Périer says that Pascal's explanation of the plan of his great work was made

"in the presence and at the prayer of a considerable number of his friends."

Here the poet-philosopher revealed his ideal to be demonstration of the possibility of proving the reality of the Christian religion. This plan was tremendously ambitious, embracing as it did the whole gamut of human knowledge. In exposing it to his friends, Pascal began by portraying a man who had always lived in a general ignorance and indifference, especially with regard to his own nature. Then, as the man suddenly awakened to an observation of himself in the frame of his surroundings, taking him by the hand, as it were, like Mephistopheles Faust, he showed him the world as it really is, with all its grandeur and its baseness. By this process the man's mind was gradually able to weigh the contrary evidences of good and evil, until at last he came to complete realization of the great truths of religion.

Etienne Périer, who was the first to make a summary of this plan from Pascal's conversation with his friends, explains that his uncle did not endeavour to prove the existence of God by geometrical demonstrations founded on evident principles, nor by metaphysical reasonings, nor by coincidences of Nature, but simply by moral proofs which appeal more nearly to the heart than to the mind. His reason for this method was a conviction that the vicious passions and attachments which corrupt the heart and the will are the greatest obstacles to faith.

It is only of comparatively recent years [1] that the *Pensées* have been given to us in their true and unmutilated form.

[1] In the editions made by MM. Faugère and Havet in 1844.

The reason for this lies first of all in the very fragmentary and unclassified state in which Pascal left these precious notes. After his death, the persecution of the Solitaires and nuns made the publication of any of the works of the Jansenists impossible. Six years later, when the Peace of the Church was being arranged, Pascal's friends began to collaborate with his family, the Périers, for the arrangement of his scattered *Thoughts*, the Duc de Roannès, his steadfast friend, being prime mover in the enterprise. A committee, consisting of Arnauld, Nicole, De Tréville, Du Bois, and De la Chaise, met to perform the revision and collocation of this great work—Pascal's nephew, now a young man of twenty-six, very well informed and of firm character, representing the interests of his family.

Primarily, it was difficult to decide what course to pursue in the grouping of the notes. The easiest manner would have been to print them off just as they were, but this might have destroyed the effect it was hoped they would produce—some of them being very imperfect and only sketches of an idea. Another method discussed was to explain the more obscure thoughts, and to supply the necessary thread to the fragments in hand. This method, while apparently the most satisfactory, proved difficult of execution.

To avoid the disadvantage of both methods of arrangement proposed, therefore, Pascal's friends decided to cull out from among the scattered notes only those which seemed the clearest and most finished, and, putting them only in sequence, to give them as they were without change or addition.

The difficulties of revision were very great, so it was decided that the Duc de Roannès, who, as Pascal's most intimate friend, seemed best suited to divine the sense and intention of each fragment, should, together with Etienne Périer, first classify the material, after which the rest of the committee might pass judgment on the result. Although the Duke added nothing to Pascal's thoughts, he curtailed a great deal, and when this first edition appeared it was a mutilation, as were all following attempts until 1842, when M. Victor Cousin issued a new and faithful transcript. Sainte-Beuve rather contests M. Cousin's condemnation of the Port-Royal edition, himself excusing its defects on the ground that Arnauld, Nicole, and De Saci had sufficient temptation,

being just issued from prison and exile, to make as good a case for Jansenism as possible out of Pascal's ideas on religion. This they did too in all reverence, and with as much exactitude as was possible at the time.

Following in M. Cousin's footsteps, M. Faugère, and lastly M. Havet, brought out still more perfect editions, their ideal being to give back to the original fragments their first significance, by separating them from a mass of other matter which had been mixed with them, and which, though by Pascal, did not belong to the original plan of the *Pensées*. The basis of their work was to consider the original MS. as the only authentic text. But even in the Port-Royal edition, mutilated as later critics may have thought it, the world felt the power, force, and sincerity and insight of the writer. As Madame de la Fayette remarked :

" It is a bad sign for those who do not enjoy this book."

And in the heart of Pascal's *Pensées*, Port-Royal was deeply rooted. That in the Preface written by Etienne Périer for the family, there was no mention of Port-Royal, and that it was merely stated that Pascal had retired to the country, was due the ever-recurring fear of ecclesiastical and papal condemnation. Pascal's writings prove incontestably his true connection with Port-Royal.

Though apparently so unlike, both in mind and genius, Pascal and Racine had several points of resemblance. Both had a human idea of religion ; for both it meant Jesus Christ ; and to both it was also Grace. To Pascal, Grace was an immense ocean out of which each man was given to drink as much or as little as Providence designed.

To Racine, Grace meant

" The Justice of God, which must be enormous like His mercy, for justice toward the reproved is less immense and would shock less than mercy toward the elect."

Following up this idea, in his *Athalie* Racine shows that the world is submissive to the incessant action of a Just God, whose wisdom, regulating everything from the beginning, governs all created beings. In Pascal, we have the perfection of prose ; in Racine, the perfection of poetry. They were also alike in their manner of arriving at this perfection of style, but while this method was original with Pascal, Racine had

learned it from Boileau, who, adopting it himself, endeavoured to teach it to his three friends, Racine, Molière, and La Fontaine.[1]

The history of *Athalie* is very different from that of *Esther*. *Esther*, after all, was but the amusement of children, whereas Racine's last play was the summing up of his life's ideals. As such it had to stand "the slings and darts of outrageous fortune," for although it was again at the request of Madame de Maintenon that Racine once more took up his laid-down pen, when, two years after the first production of *Esther*, this new Biblical creation was finished, times had changed. Both Madame de Maintenon and the King had become more pious and influenced by public opinion. Why, said the busybodies, should you allow young girls at St. Cyr to be thus exposed on the stage before the whole Court? Intimidated by these whispered criticisms of her piety, Madame de Maintenon gave way to the extent of never having *Athalie* played publicly. But, for her and the King, Racine had his masterpiece acted in a small room at St. Cyr by the *Blues*, or oldest pupils, alone. On this occasion the girls were in their everyday costumes, without jewels or adornment of any kind, and minus a stage. Two or three times afterward the piece was played in the same manner by these young women at Versailles. Outside this small circle, *Athalie* was little spoken of, and made no excitement of any kind. When it was printed it was subjected to the disdain of all the world, and only later its intrinsic value was recognized.[2]

Arnauld's criticism gave preference to *Esther*, and for this he said he had many reasons, contenting himself with the one remark that in *Esther* he found many more very edifying things capable of inspiring piety.[3] In this opinion he was joined by the exiled Jansenists, who, like Arnauld, remained loyal to Racine's first Biblical inspiration as portraying more

[1] "Mais mon esprit, tremblant sur le choix de ses mots
N'en dira jamais un, s'il ne tombe à propos,
Et ne saurait souffrir qu'une phrase insipide
Vienne à la fin d'un vers rempli la place vide.
Ainsi recommencant un ouvrage vingt fois
Si j'écris quatre mots, j'en effacerai trois" (Boileau, Satire III.).
Just before his death, Racine made a last sacrifice of his art to God by throwing a copy of his works, on which he had corrected with his own hand the expressions and rhymes that did not satisfy him, into the fire. He feared to have anything too perfect, wherein he might retain a grain of self-complacence.

[2] Théophile de la Vallée, *Histoire de St. Cyr*, p. 98.

[3] Letter to the Landgraf of Hesse-Rheinfels, 13th March 1689.

aptly, perhaps, their own situation. They did not realize the greater compliment to Port-Royal in this elder daughter of Racine, which could have been created only by a poet profoundly impregnated with the spirit of the monastery—its moral grandeur, its stoicism, its patience under persecution. It was said that Racine had written *Esther* for Madame de Maintenon, but *Athalie* for himself, and if his younger child, the latter was certainly his favourite.

In this case, posterity has justified the opinion of the few, for from Voltaire, who declared that France was glorified in *Athalie*, and that it was the masterpiece not only of the French theatre and of poetry, but of the human mind, to Sainte-Beuve, who classed it as one of the three highest monuments of Christian art in the seventeenth century, there has since Racine's day been but one opinion as to the literary and spiritual significance of this play.[1]

Moreover, that it belonged to Port-Royal by right of inspiration, there can be no doubt. The affinity is graphically described by an anonymous correspondent of Sainte-Beuve's, who says :

" It seems to me that one may say also that the glory of Port-Royal is *Athalie* ; for *Athalie* is virtue, God, Moses, Jacob, Abraham, all the Hebrew genius. . . . Delicacy united to faith—this is the character of Port-Royal. . . . The genius of Racine owes to Port-Royal that holy flame and that elevation which he has not known except in *Athalie*." [2]

This salient quality of an unsurpassable moral grandeur, *Athalie* possesses in common with those " grand ruins," the *Pensées*.

Thus, as the outward wonder and glory of Port-Royal, it is fitting that in this day and generation the mortal remains of its two greatest literary disciples should lie almost side by side. St. Étienne du Mont in Paris is the happy custodian of the memory of both ; and, in a dark corner of the same church, their epitaphs may be read side by side.[3]

[1] " Le temps a vengé l'auteur," said Voltaire, " mais ce grand homme est mort sans jouir du succés de son plus admirable ouvrage."

[2] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, v. p. 151.

[3] In his novel called *L'Histoire Comique*, Anatole France relates that after the destruction of the Abbey and violation of sepulchres, while the body of Jean Racine was buried at St. Étienne du Mont without honours, the tombstone with Boileau's epitaph was used as a flagstone in the choir of the little

Buried as he had desired, at the feet of M. Hamon at Port-Royal des Champs, on the destruction of the monastery Racine's body was exhumed and taken to St. Étienne du Mont, as the parish of Madame Racine, his wife. His last poetic words were on Charity :

> " En vain, je parlerais le langage des Anges
> En vain, mon Dieu, de tes louanges,
> Je remplirois tout l'univers :
> Sans amour, ma gloire n'égale
> Que la gloire de la cymbale
> Qui d'un vain bruit frappe les airs." [1]

Let him who will take away from Port-Royal these two great men—for those who try to look reverently and philosophically at human life and its mysteries, Racine and Pascal will ever represent an intrinsic and precious part of its influence.

Church of Magny. Here it was found in 1808, broken in six pieces, and the name of Racine effaced by the boots of the peasants. It was at that time repaired and placed in the chapel at St. Étienne.

[1] Rough translation—

> In vain I would speak with the tongue of angels,
> In vain, my God, Thy praises tell
> Throughout the Universe so vast.
> Without love, my pride would fall
> Like the pomp of the cymbal,
> As with empty din it strikes the blast.

CHAPTER VII

LAST STRUGGLE AGAINST PERSECUTION, AND THE PASSING OF PORT-ROYAL

"Mourir à tout et attendre tout ; voilà ce que nous avons à faire"
Motto of Mère Angélique

ONE of the most impressive scenes of the dying Port-Royal was the funeral of M. de Saci, whom we left at the moment of his release from the Bastille being graciously received by Louis XIV. From that time, he had tried to forget his prison experience, saying to his friend Fontaine :

"Let us not imitate those who, returning from a long journey, can afterwards speak to the whole world of nothing but what they have seen." [1]

The fifteen years following the Peace of the Church which preceded his death, were passed by De Saci either at Pomponne, Port-Royal des Champs, or at Paris in directing souls under his care, or in preparing the translation of the Bible, of which the New Testament of Mons was but the first part, and the bulk of which he had made in prison. During these years, the whole spiritual life of Port-Royal—not the political—revolved around this brother of Antoine Le Maitre. As Sainte-Beuve said :

"He was the entrance gate for those outside, the lobby and the lamp inside." [2]

Finally, on the resumption of the persecution, he was obliged definitely to retire to Pomponne, and there in January 1684, in the midst of uninterrupted spiritual

[1] *Mémoires*, ii. pp. 520–540. [2] *Port-Royal*, ii. p. 356.

ministrations, he died, aged seventy-one, murmuring only the words :

" O blessed Purgatory ! "

In his will, he had asked to be buried at Port-Royal des Champs, but at the moment this was a difficult request to fulfil, the winter being very extreme, and secrecy a condition. However, his friends gladly accepted the task. And it is said that the Duchesse de Lesdiguières had prepared a suite of two hundred persons carrying torches to receive the remains of the revered priest as they passed through Paris, but as it was thought dangerous to allow such a cortège, his body was taken secretly to St. Jacques du Haut Pas between six and seven in the evening. On arriving at St. Jacques, however, terror so seized the friends lest some obstacle or order should interfere with the journey to Port-Royal the next day, they decided to start that very night. So, mounting into carriages, the faithful mourners departed with their burden at eleven o'clock, in the deep snow, and escorted by boys holding torches. To the great astonishment of the nuns, who did not expect the funeral cortège till the next evening, the bearers of the last remains of De Saci arrived at the monastery at five o'clock in the early morning. At once, a hundred nuns made ready to do him honour,

" shining more with charity than the candles they carried in their hands."

The story of the ceremony of interment is touchingly told by Fontaine, De Saci's devoted friend : of how they robed him in his ecclesiastical vestments, of the chanting of the Psalms, the sprinkling with holy water, the incense—all the details of the ways in which piety and love could honour its dead. And when they had carried him to his last resting-place in the cemetery, each nun, after a farewell glance, imprinted a holy kiss on the dead face of the priest whom for so many years she had loved and revered.

Mère Angélique de St. Jean [1] and Arnauld de Luzanci

[1] It seems that the death of this her beloved uncle and Confessor was a blow from which Mère Angélique de St. Jean never rallied. She died three weeks later, repeating the words of the Song of Solomon : " I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up nor awake my love, till he please." See Fontaine, *Mémoires*, ii. p. 536.

both quickly followed their beloved uncle, and the poor Fontaine was left behind, lamenting:

"I avow," he cried, "that in seeing this brother and sister stricken to death by that of M. de Saci, I should blush—I who believed myself to have always loved him—not to follow him like them, and I return to despair in comparing these two persons, whose love has been stronger than death, to myself who have loved so little." [1]

Meantime at Port-Royal many changes were taking place. In 1694, M. de Harlai the Archbishop passed away, and shortly afterward M. de Noailles, Bishop of Chalons and Marne, was appointed his successor. A very different character from his predecessor, the new Archbishop was pious, sincere, and simple, of pure morals and many virtues, but gifted with neither policy nor address. Although his desire was to be just and impartial, it was unfortunate that in following out this wish he pleased no one. Fénélon said he had a short and confused mind, and Sainte-Beuve remarks that

"he passed his life in giving the Jansenists vain hopes which ruined them, and the Jesuits forced satisfactions which did not satisfy them." [2]

On his first visit to Port-Royal two years after his accession, M. de Noailles seemed very satisfied with the state of things there.

"He entered the monastery," said Du Fossé, "with a burning lamp in one hand and the balances of Justice in the other, in order to see everything and to weigh everything according to the measures of the Sanctuary." [3]

Justice and Charity both satisfied, the Archbishop left with his tongue full of praises for the holy place. The King was, however, implacable, and in 1699, hearing that the Countess of Grammont had made a retreat at Port-Royal des Champs, he had her name crossed off the list of ladies who were to accompany him to Marly.

"If one goes to Port-Royal," he said, "one should not go to Marly." [4]

Peace was eventually made for Madame de Grammont, but not for Port-Royal.

[1] *Mémoires*, ii. p. 540.
[2] *Port-Royal*, vi. p. 163.
[3] *Mémoires*, ii. p. 200.
[4] St. Simon *Mémoires* (Ed. Boislisle), ii. p. 14.

Indeed, the last scene of the drama was now preparing, again the matter of the Letter of the Law. It began (in 1701) with a singular affair called "the Case of Conscience," or a consultation held among ecclesiastics as to the submission one should yield with regard to the Constitutions of the Popes against Jansenism. This famous discussion was, alas! nothing more nor less than a renaissance of the old question of *fait* and *droit*, the author of the revival being, strange to say, a Jansenist, M. Eustace, Confessor at Port-Royal des Champs. This well-meaning, but badly advised priest busied himself in trying to get Doctors of the Sorbonne to sign the Consultation, and forty did so, only one refusing. A year afterward, the Consultation was printed, and the battle began by the matter being taken to Rome, where it was condemned by Clement XI. On this, the Cardinal de Naoilles issued a *Mandement* censuring the Consultation as reviving quarrels and favouring equivocal quibbles. Soon all the Doctors of the Sorbonne revoked their signature, and the one man who had not signed, exiled by the King, prudently took flight and joined Père Quesnel in Brussels. The next year, in pursuance of a rigorous policy adopted in foreign countries, Père Quesnel was discovered by the higher ecclesiastical authority, and arrested at Brussels by the order of the King of Spain, and thrown into the prison of that town. Here his papers and correspondence were seized. Sent to Paris, and delivered over to the Jesuits, these documents made a tremendous stir. Showing a great box of them, Père La Chaise exclaimed in triumph:

"Here we have all the mysteries of the iniquity of Père Quesnel! All the papers, memoirs, letters, rough drafts, even to their cipher and jargon, for more than forty years. And it is astonishing how much there is in it of things against the King and the State." [1]

And truly these papers revealed a good deal of secret activity among the Jansenists—enough, it was said, to keep Madame de Maintenon busy all her evenings for ten years getting them in condition for the King to read. Many people were compromised, many imprisoned, on this evidence.

At Port-Royal des Champs the theological struggle had

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, v. p. 178.

recommenced in 1706 by the sending to the nuns of a Mandement accompanied by a *Bulle* from Rome, which they were requested to sign. Again the heroic sisters refused, and when the Grand Vicar, M. Gilberte, came to remonstrate with these late seventeenth century nuns, he received the same answer as that formerly given by the courageous Mère Angélique :

" But must we give up our consciences ? "

They were sustained in their stand by Père Quesnel, who by this time had escaped from his prison, and was in hiding in Holland. The word of their oracle was enough : Père Quesnel bade them hold firm, so in spite of other and better counsel, the misguided women persisted in their refusal.

From the beginning of persecution, all material connection between the sister monasteries at the Champs and Paris had been prohibited. In 1661, when the twelve nuns had been carried away into captivity and the Sisters of the Visitation had replaced them, the nucleus of quite a new institution had been formed of the ten sisters who by unconditional signature of the Formulary had escaped captivity, and under the protection of the Archbishop these nuns were then allowed to choose a new Abbess from among their own number—such Abbess having sole right over all property at Port-Royal de Paris.

Even though at the Peace of the Church the nuns at the Champs were declared innocent, and solemnly re-established in their rights, these rights only applied to Les Champs, and no re-union was effected. On the contrary, a Decree of Council, dated 1669, formally separated the two houses for ever, the property being divided. Paris had a perpetual Abbess nominated by the King, while at the Champs the office was still elective every three years. A third of the property in the country was given to the Paris house. As, in addition to this third, Port-Royal de Paris also kept its exterior sources of revenue, it should have been well satisfied with the division. But greedy of the property amassed by the provident country house, the Paris sisters werewicked enough to try to possess themselves of the estate in the country. At their instigation, agents were driven away and imprisoned, and the revenue of farms diverted to their use. The nuns

of the Champs had to subsist as best they could, on the gifts of friends and the product of the books of Ces Messieurs. One day the Abbess of Port-Royal de Paris gave a ball in the Parloir of the monastery. Happening to come in, even the patron Archbishop, the Cardinal de Noailles, saw the incongruity, and remarked:

"It is not just that Port-Royal de Paris should dance while Port-Royal des Champs pays the fiddles." [1]

Thus, while at Port-Royal des Champs the ancient piety and spirit still reigned even in the midst of persecution and ignominy, at Port-Royal de Paris scandalous corruption quickly but surely crept in to undermine the old associations and traditions. Soon, through intrigue, an irreparable chasm yawned between the two formerly so closely-allied institutions, and now the Paris sisters were to compass the final destruction of those whom they should have cherished, but whom they hated and envied.

On the refusal of the nuns at Les Champs to sign the *Mandement* of Rome, those of Paris at once petitioned the King to revoke the ancient division of goods, to suppress Port-Royal des Champs altogether, and to unite its property to theirs. Influence being brought to bear to this end, on the 22nd November 1707, an Ordinance of the King consummated the unholy desire of Port-Royal de Paris. The goods of the Champs were seized, and from the poor nuns even their daily bread was taken away—not only that for their bodily wants, but the spiritual food of the Holy Eucharist denied them as well.

In vain the nuns protested by all sorts of requests and letters. On the 19th December 1708, the *Bulle* from Rome for the destruction of Port-Royal des Champs was registered in Parliament, and in July 1709 M. de Noailles gave his decree for its extinction, the union of its goods with that of Port-Royal de Paris. On the 7th August this decree was read to the nuns of Port-Royal.

Without the gates of Port-Royal des Champs, as without the gates of the Jerusalem of the vision-seeing prophet of old, the autumn of 1709, there thus lay in wait,

"Dogs and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters."

[1] Racine, *Abrégé*, p. 217.

The "grapes of iniquity" were at last fully ripe—it was time for the sharp sickle of God to be thurst in, time for the harvest to be gathered.

When on the first day of October 1709, following upon the Decree of the Archbishop that Port-Royal des Champs should be sacrificed and its goods given over to the Paris institution, Madame de Chateau Renaud, Abbess of Port-Royal de Paris, appeared before the Grating of the Parloir of the Abbey des Champs and demanded admittance in the name of the Archbishop, the face of a simple Prioress confronted her at the wicket. Three years before, on being apprised of the death of Mère Elizabeth de Sainte Anne Boulard,[1] and asked to allow the usual election, M. de Noailles had replied that there would be no need for another. Thus the few remaining adherents of the Champs—a parcel of timid *religieuses* only twenty-two in number—had since the last Abbess's death been under the guidance of Mère Anastasie du Mesnil, the Prioress appointed by Mère Boulard on her deathbed. Imbued with the historic spirit of Port-Royal, this courageous nun replied to the demand of the haughty Paris dame, accompanied by two nuns and two notaries, that in the name of the community she protested against the claim of Port-Royal de Paris, and that the doors of the Cloister would not be opened to enemies of the Abbey.[2]

At this, without protest, Madame de Chateau Renaud quietly entered the Church, ordered the great bell of the Monastery rung, and then proceeded, while her notaries took documentary note of her actions, to touch the altar and various parts of the sanctuary in legal token of her seizure of the Abbey. Imagine the desolation of the poor frightened nuns as their great bell tolled out, and, impelled by the spitefulness of the rival Abbess's attendants, continued to sound its lament with insistent force even after Madame de Chateau Renaud had finished her investiture of the Church. The minutes passed, the tones of the bell grew ever louder, until, goaded to action,

[1] It is curious to note that the name of the last Abbess of Port-Royal before the reform of Mère Angélique was the same (Boulehart), though spelled differently.

[2] The following description is taken from *Mémoires sur la Destruction de Port-Royal*, by Fouillot, containing the Relation of Madame de Chateau Renaud, and other *Mémoires* of the time.

one of the servants of the monastery climbed into the bell tower, and cut the rope of the ancient signal-giver !

On finishing her investiture, Madame de Chateau Renaud mounted the hill behind to Les Granges, where she went through a similar form. Eating there a good dinner, she then proceeded to the neighbouring St. Cyr, where next morning she reported to Madame de Maintenon all that had happened.

After listening with great attention and patience for over an hour,

" Tell me," said Madame de Maintenon, " did you notice in the Church of Port-Royal des Champs the *unction* it is said to possess ? "

" I replied," said Madame de Chateau Renaud afterward, " that I was not good enough to have these sentiments, and I assured her that I had felt none in particular, . . . that I might have the honour to say without flattery that I had found in St. Cyr veritably that unction, etc. etc."

As the Gate of Port-Royal des Champs finally closed upon Madame de Chateau Renaud, the poor nuns left behind in quivering fear of further events, were as usual overwhelmed with presages of disaster, and these were crowned one day when the lamps of the dormitory were found extinguished—a thing which had never before occurred. That very night (the 28th October) a regiment of soldiers quietly surrounded the Abbey in the pouring rain, investing the woods and heights of the Valley of the Yvette as if making ready for the siege of a garrisoned town. In the early morning the unconscious nuns were going through their usual orisons when at seven o'clock the Prioress was notified that a file of carriages was approaching the monastery, and that M. d'Argenson, Prefect of Police, demanded to speak with her.

On being received in the *Parloir*, the King's Officer explained that he had an order to search the interior of the monastery, and requested the opening of the doors. Without demur, the Prioress delivered over to him her keys, and while the house was being searched for incriminating books and papers, she led her nuns to service in the Church, saying :

" This is still another visit to our house ; I do not know the consequences of it, but we must always rest in the arms of the mercy of God, who knows our needs better than we do ourselves."

After service, the community being assembled, M. d'Argenson announced that in three hours their dispersion into various convents was to take place, the carriages being there for that purpose.

"Monseigneur," said the Prioress, "we are quite ready to obey; half an hour is more than sufficient for us to say a last adieu, and to take with us a breviary, a Bible, and our Constitutions."

Upon this, embracing, the nuns consoled each other for their separation by the thought that if united to God, Port-Royal might be found everywhere.[1] By five o'clock that night the monastery was deserted by the nuns, the Prioress being the last to leave. Afterward they confessed that they had found in the agents of the law more true commiseration and sympathy than had been shown them by ecclesiastics sent to torture and vex them. For, touched with pity for these gentle and pious women, the youngest of whom was fifty, M. d'Argenson and his agents conducted them to the carriages, seeing that they were well treated by their escorts, and allowing them as much liberty as was compatible with the circumstances.

When in rendering an account of the affair, M. d'Argenson reported to the King that he was surprised at the constancy of these nuns, and especially at their perfect obedience, the King's only reply was that he was content with their obedience, but sorry that they were not of his religion.

With the gentle nuns it was said that sobriety, modesty, and the other virtues departed also from Port-Royal. The rude soldiers left behind to guard the deserted house did not respect the retreat of God, the New Jerusalem, but allowed themselves licence usual to a town under pillage. And the Valley of Yvette itself resounded with the laments of the poor, who, coming to receive their customary alms, realized that they would never more be solaced by the charity of the tender nuns:

"Mercy upon us!" they cried; "now we must die of hunger!"[2]

The news of the military seizure of a handful of innocent women outraged even Fénélon, who had fought against the Letter of the Law of *Ces Messieurs*:

"A stroke of authority such as that which has just been made at Port-Royal," he wrote, "can only excite public

[1] "Quand on est bien unie avec Dieu, on trouve Port-Royal partout."

[2] Racine, *Abrégé* (Ed. Gazier), p. 225.

compassion for these women, and indignation against their persecutors." [1]

Thus, exactly one hundred years after Mère Angélique experienced that first "Action of Grace," Port-Royal was no more. Since the Massacre of St. Bartholomew so cruel a deed had never been perpetrated in the name of Religion. Now, as then, both Reform and Renaissance were swallowed up in a moment of fanaticism, and again not only the remaining brave nuns and pious Solitaires stood still to ask the question of François I^er^ in his captivity:

"Où estes-vous allez, mes belles amourettes?" [2]

but all thinking France seemed to reiterate the despairing line of the captive king:

"Les Arbes sont muets et sourds." [3]

[1] Lettre du 24 Novembre 1709, au Duc de Chevreuse.

[2] See St. Simon, *Memoires* (Cheruel ed. Hachette, 1905), v. p. 76.

[3] "Où estes-vous allez, mes belles amourettes,
Changerez-vous de lieu tous les jours?
A qui dirai-je mon tourment,
Mon tourment et ma peine?
Rien ne répond à ma voix
Les Arbres sont meuts et sourds.
Où estes-vous allez, mes belles amourettes?"

Chanson de François I^er^.

CHAPTER VIII

PORT-ROYAL OF TO-DAY

"Du plus saint temple, hélas ! quel déplorable reste !
Un vieux mur est le seul qui rappelle à nos cœurs
Cette enceinte bénie, où le Père céleste
Aimait à se former de vrais adorateurs.
Ah ! qu'au pied de ce mur une ardente prière
Vienne expier cent ans de profanation !
Et que du Dieu de paix la bénédiction
De Port-Royal encor passe un port salutaire !"

LOUIS SILVY

ALMOST immediately after the desertion of Port-Royal des Champs by the nuns, the question arose: What was to become of the old monastery itself, the shell from which the spirit had departed? With a glorified perspective of the grandeur of the buildings, there was at first some idea of making the place a sort of adjunct for the ladies of St. Cyr. On his part, the Cardinal de Noailles continued to insist on the transference of the Paris nuns to the country, but neither the Abbess nor the nuns were anxious to go to the Desert. After a second visit there of two or three days in November, Madame de Chateau-Renaud came back with a swelling in her limbs, incident, she said, to the dampness. This settled the matter of emigration, and decision against it was aided by the co-operation of the *Messieurs* of St. Sulpice, who feared that if the Paris nuns went to the country the Jesuits would somehow acquire Port-Royal de Paris, and found there a rival monastery too near their own. Both parties, therefore, endeavoured to influence Madame de Maintenon to secure an order from the King for the complete destruction of Port-Royal des Champs. Thus, an *Arrêt du Conseil,* dated January 1710, in which it was represented that the buildings had not only become useless, but a needless

expense to maintain, ordered the demolition of them all, the church alone excepted. In the early part of June of that same year the first stroke of the hammer was heard on the sacred buildings, and soon only the church remained standing.

Strangely enough, it was an Arnauld who was responsible for the last great desecration of the Thébaide of his fathers. A year after the destruction of the buildings, it occurred to the Marquis de Pomponne that he ought to have the bodies of his own family exhumed, and removed for burial in another place. In asking permission of the King, the grandson of Arnauld d'Andilly said he wished this

"in order that his posterity should lose the memory that these bodies were interred in a place which had had the misfortune to displease His Majesty." [1]

Others who had relatives buried at Port-Royal following the example of M. de Pomponne, soon the church which had so long guarded the treasure of the Jansenist dead was allowed to be profaned by any person who chose to go there and take away the stones of the cloister or the tiles from the floor itself, even the graves being left open and gaping, at the mercy of thieves and treasure-hunters. And in 1712 the church itself was razed to the ground.

But we must turn from this sad picture of desolation, to fitly describe which the words of Racine's *Athalie* have so often been quoted:

> "Mais je n'ai plus trouvé qu'un horrible mélange
> D'os et de chair meurtris et traînés dans la fange,
> Des lambeaux pleins de sang et des membres affreux,
> Que des chiens dévorants se disputaient entre eux!"

to the brighter and more philosophical contrast given by the later history of the domain of Port-Royal des Champs. A pilgrimage made to the spot in 1767 [2] enumerates the dovecot, the mill-house, the canal, a bit of the terrace of Madame de Longueville, and a few stones of the spot called the Solitude, sole witnesses to the former glory of the active, populous, and absolutely self-sufficient Monastery.

The Revolution must have passed this desolation by as

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, vi. p. 237.

[2] André Hallays, *Pélerinage de Port-Royal*, p. 96.

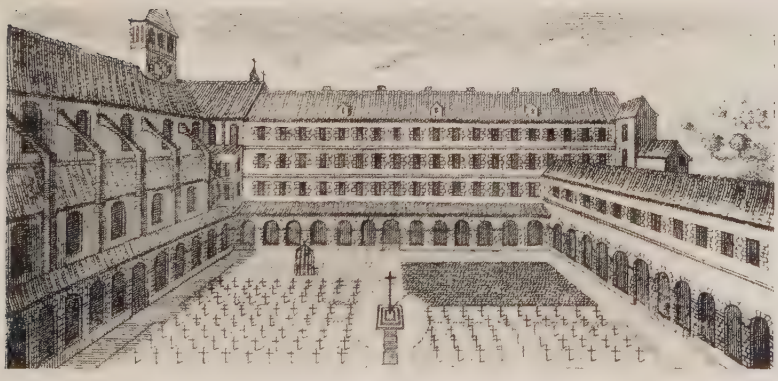
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

The former principal entrance to the Monastery, also that used by Madame de Longueville and her friends, is now closed, but, entering the grounds about a kilomètre farther on, by the St. Lambert Gate, the first recognizable landmark is the reconstructed Solitude, easily repopulated in imagination with the white figures of the shadowy nuns who passed in its cool shade, with knitting and other handiwork, the few leisure hours of the hot summer days. Surrounded by trees on the borders of the wooded heights, the Solitude, too, is hidden and remote, but a turn in the drive brings to view the site of the city which "lieth four-square." Glancing round, who could now believe that this deserted place was once bustling with industries of all kinds! That two hundred years ago, thirty buildings stood here, all doing their part in the general activity—a bakery, a surgery, a pharmacy, a washhouse, a joinery, a forge; a tannery producing leather, a mill grinding out flour, beehives giving honey, kitchen gardens abounding in delicious fruit and vegetables, a barnyard teeming with poultry, and at times the sound of music and the subdued tones of children's voices. And yet the "unction" which so disturbed Madame de Maintenon seems still there, and as one stands in the midst of the encircling hills, alone with Nature and the memories of the past, Peace falls like a benediction into the spirit.

At first glimpse, the place looks like a great farm, but presently a few familiar objects begin to emerge. The dovecot of the original Monastery (colombier) is the most picturesque figure in the scene, but to-day one looks in vain for the useful mill of olden days. In its place rise two modern farm buildings, one of which is occupied by the gardener-caretaker. To the right the next thing to meet the eye is a single ancient-looking tower covered with ivy, of seemingly inferior proportions. This is, however, the last relic of those towers of defence built by the Solitaires during the Fronde, from behind whose protecting height and strength the great warriors De Pontis and De Beaumont are said to have shouted defiance to the Frondists.

The hand of the destroyer seems to have been specially lifted against the eastern portion of the Monastery, originally devoted to such outside friends as the Queen of Poland, Madame de Guéméné, the Duchesse de Liancourt, and many others. For of it hardly a trace remains. Only the ruins of

THE "SOLITUDE"



THE CLOISTER

TWO VIGNETTES OF PORT ROYAL DES CHAMPS. AFTER MAGDELEINE HORTEMELS

a porter's lodge, and a recently discovered well, betray the site of either the Z-shaped dwelling of Madame de Longueville, or of the little house nestling up against it belonging to the Duchesse's "visible angel," as Racine called Mlle de Vertus. But at the foot of the excavation left of the De Longueville cellars, Mère Angélique's cool and refreshing fountain is proudly pointed out, and not far away a spreading walnut-tree, said to have been planted by Pascal, casts a grateful shadow. On the spot of the apartments once occupied by Pascal, Racine, Boileau, Cardinal Retz, called *Logement des Messieurs*, there now extends an immense grazing field for cattle.

Fortunately for the visitor of to-day, the site of the church is distinctly marked. In 1844, with M. Silvy's permission, the Duc de Luines caused extensive excavations to be made there with the hope of finding the bones of his ancestress, the beautiful Duchesse, who with her two twins was buried in the choir. Unfortunately, he did not succeed in his object,[1] but the work laid bare the foundations of the thirteenth-century church, which since 1652 had been covered with twelve mètres of sand. This filling-in, which had the effect of falsifying the architectural proportions of the church, had been done by Mère Angélique, bent upon the preservation of the health of her nuns, and anxious to prevent the malarial fumes from the historic pond underneath from continuing their ravaging work.

The site of the excavations is sacred ground indeed, and fragments of columns, tombstones, etc., which lie around must produce a feeling of reverence. For here once knelt in prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving all the noble souls of Port-Royal, here ascended to heaven the aspirations and enthusiasm of which the history of the Monastery is full. Here, too, occurred the ceremonies, festivals of saints, and funeral services for the dead whose bones rested, and still remain in many cases unmolested, beneath the very feet of the visitor. For the cemetery *du dehors* was, according to custom, always near the church, pious persons loving to sleep their eternal sleep within the sound of the bell.

[1] But, as he wrote M. Silvy: "I have personally great pleasure in having restored to the light of day the ruins of an establishment whose venerable inhabitants were dear to my ancestors" (Gazier, *Notice sur Port-Royal des Champs*, p. 25).

From the church the *Porte des Sacrements* led into the cloister, which enclosed the nuns' cemetery (*cimitière du dedans*), and was used by the nuns, according to the rule of St. Benoit, as a promenade, they thus having ever before their eyes in life the image of Death.

On the seventeenth-century level, just above the excavated site, stands a little Gothic chapel built in 1891 by the architect H. Mabille[1] to replace M. Silvy's Oratory Museum, which in seventy years had fallen into disrepair. In front of it two fine portrait busts of Racine and Pascal, the glory of Port-Royal, invite one to enter the place where are treasured the last souvenirs of the former inhabitants of the Monastery: fragments of buildings, pieces of the windows of the thirteenth-century church, a plan in relief of the Monastery as it once stood. The stained-glass windows represent scenes of the past, and in gazing at these and the six engravings of Magdeleine Hortemels, which hang on the wall, the life of the old Port-Royal once more seems graphic and real. These prints are priceless, as they remain to this day the only authentic representation of the original Abbey. They also have had their history. In 1709, at the destruction of the Monastery, the workmen wished to make away with the work of the former nun-artist, then living with her family in Paris. With this idea in view, on some pretext or other they entered her father's book-shop in Paris, and carried off both plates and engravings found there to M. d'Argenson, who, after keeping them for some time, finally had the grace to restore them to their owner.

The chapel is also the custodian of a Jansenist library of more than two hundred volumes, some precious collections of autographs, money and medals, as well as a succession of portraits of the most illustrious of the nuns and Solitaires.[2] As late as three or four years ago, the following inscription was affixed to the wall:

"Ici repose Armand de Bourbon, Prince de Conti-Pézénas, Villeneuve—Avignon—Port-Royal."

It is the garden, however, which seems best to have survived

[1] The best description of the Port-Royal Church was written by M. Mabille under the title *L'Église de Port-Royal des Champs* (1204–1710).

[2] For these latter, see M. Gazier's fine collection of reproductions printed as *Port-Royal au XVII^e Siècle.*

the ravages of the centuries. Beautiful trees, flowers, and fruits still speak of the presence of the recluses who tried literally to carry out the commands of their great Master.

On regretfully leaving this quiet spot, the visitor is forcibly reminded of the neighbouring royal palace where lived the Court which planned such destruction. And with M. Gazier,[1] one feels that to really understand the age of Louis XIV it does not suffice to see Versailles—Port-Royal is also necessary to the picture.

Long before the destruction of the Champs, Port-Royal de Paris, as we have seen, had lost nearly all traces of its early character, and later in the eighteenth century it even became Molinistic in its views. In 1790, the nuns were expelled altogether. During the Revolution it was made a prison under the name of Port Libre, still retaining, says M. Hallays,[2] a last spark of the Spirit of Port-Royal, its prisoners being "people of merit, and decency respected there." The next evolution of the ancient Abbey was into a Foundlings' Home, from which by natural transition it became the present Maternity Hospital. Thus, a much more tangible shell remains of Port-Royal de Paris than of the Mother Institution. To-day, by walking across the bustling Avenue of the Observatoire (once known as the Rue d'Enfer), full of steam and electric trams, of automobiles, and the noise of twentieth-century Paris, taking a few paces along the Boulevard of Port-Royal (Rue de la Bourbe), and entering the courtyard of the Hospital, we may literally step again into the material outside world of the home of Truth and Charity in the days of Mère Angélique.

Before us, almost in its ancient form, is the nucleus of the buildings which as Port-Royal de Paris were originally filled with the cloistered nuns and their pious friends. Here are still standing two of the houses built by those worldly but repentant souls, who chose the immediate neighbourhood of saintliness to fortify and strengthen their remorse and heavenly aspirations. One of these now serves as office to the Hospital, the other, supposed to have been that of Madame de Sablé, is situated in the angle of the Rue de la Bourbe and the Rue d'Enfer. Here is still the church built

[1] *Port-Royal des Champs : Notice historique à l'Usage des Visiteurs*, p. 1.
[2] *Pélerinage de Port-Royal*, p. 76.

in 1644, and christened Saint-Sacrement, but how changed its state! Once an imposing edifice adorned with the work of Philippe de Champagne, and beautified by all the evidences of a living love and devotion, it is now a mere lifeless, unlovely chapel. In it remain few Jansenist souvenirs. It contains one or two poor modern paintings, a disorderly array of benches, an altar devoid of anything to command reverence or call forth admiration. In a corner, to be sure, is some fine old wood-work, singularly enough inscribed with the letter D, but the uneven wooden flooring and stained walls are the most tangible reminders of the ancient outward glory.

Its "unction" is no more to be felt, except, perhaps, in the little corner where the tombstone of Antoine le Maitre stands in its old majesty, the words of M. Hamon's eulogy still proudly distinct, and telling of the virtues of the first Anchorite, or, in the greater part of the church now walled off and used as a laundry, where linen for the hospital lies stacked in white piles to the very roof, and where, underneath, in the choir of the nuns, hidden from the prying gaze, rest the ashes and tombstone of Mère Angélique.

With regard to the significance of Port-Royal to-day, we feel that albeit the saintly nuns and Solitaires could not realize on this earth their particular vision of the New Jerusalem,

"where God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes,"

their influence cannot die, and history shows that even now it is moving and inspiring serious people in Belgium, France, and even England.

In 1885 a French Bishop said publicly:

"Had God willed that we should still have the spirit of Port-Royal, we would not now be where we are."

But what was the spirit of Port-Royal? Alas! even as we seek to define its essence, it seems to soar in butterfly flight far above us. Turning to the *Constitutions*, said to have been drawn up by Mère Agnès, we find first the ideal of the mystic and recluse:

"My secret is for me, because the diffusion of good thoughts dissipates them, and the facility of speaking of those which are not good, imprints them more firmly on the mind,"

An ideal maintained, as they thought, only by aloofness from the

[1] *The Constitutions of Port-Royal*, p. 397.

world, from human intercourse and companionship. Reading a little further, we come upon the general aim of all religious aspiration : roughly speaking, the seeking for God, and the following of Him in all things : piety, mutual charity, and prayer being the means used. This is, however, but an epitome of the universal spirit of Religion, an instinct which never dies, but persists through all the different names given to it. And if one of these man-made titles, Jansenism, has dropped away from the feeling it covered, the initial enthusiasm remains to work its leavening influence throughout the ages. For enthusiasm seeks out and illuminates the heights and the depths, makes flowery the by-paths of the imagination, untangles the jungles of reasoning, and fathoms the deep ravines of thought. Without it, History would die : it is Life itself, and with Pascal, we of this later age still believe that :

" The whole series of human generations, during the course of ages, should be regarded as one man, ever living and ever learning."

For us Port-Royal lives on, and draws irresistibly in its universal significance.

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